

**BIG ARMS MANUAL: YOUR 4 WEEK PLAN**

**FIT FOR LIFE**

October 2015

# Men's Fitness

**RUGBY WORLD  
CUP EXCLUSIVE**

**GRIT  
POWER  
SPEED**

**GEORGE FORD'S  
BLUEPRINT  
FOR SUCCESS**

**ADD AN INCH  
TO YOUR  
BICEPS** p139

**SPECIAL REPORT**

**HOW FAR IS  
TOO FAR?  
WHAT KILLED  
3 FIT MEN IN  
THE WELSH  
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**4**  
**MUSCLE  
SUPPLEMENTS  
THAT ACTUALLY  
WORK**

**MF TESTED**

THE BEST  
PT APPS

HOME GYM  
KETTLEBELLS

BIKE KIT FOR  
DARK NIGHTS



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POPCORN  
CHICKEN** p20

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LIKE A  
FIREMAN** p120

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STAMINA IN  
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# MAN OF TODAY

GERARD BUTLER FOR BOSS BOTTLED



**BOSS**  
HUGO BOSS

#MANOFTODAY



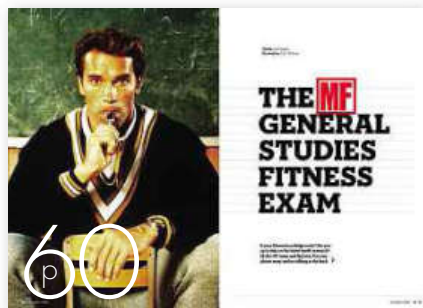
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George Ford has made  
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Knowledge is power – and strength, and focus, and good health. Take our exam to find out where your knowhow, and your fitness, could be improved



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# EDITOR'S LETTER



## HAVE YOU EVER MET ANYONE ON THE CUSP OF GREATNESS?

George Ford is already a highly successful,

celebrated rugby union player, but this month's World Cup offers him the chance to be much more than that. Come 31st October he could be joining the ranks of Farah, Wiggins and Wilkinson - household names, whose mere mention conjure up images of personal and national triumph.

To do this he's going to need to achieve something pretty special at Twickenham but, as you'll see from *MF* fitness editor Sam Rider's interview with the fly-half (p46), Ford has put in the groundwork to make this a distinct possibility: namely a brutal training regime, calculated career gambles and personal sacrifice (drop kicks on Christmas Day for starters).

Meeting Ford on a run-down industrial estate just off the M25 was a bizarre experience. It was hard to believe that this polite 23-year-old would in a few weeks have millions of eyes bearing down on him from the stands, and from sofas and pubs further afield, willing him to victory (or object failure, depending on where you first popped out into the world). And there he was standing in a car park, happily booting a ball into a wheelie bin.

Ford may have a team of professionals behind him, taking note of every calorie he eats and every rep he cranks out, but he's an *MF* cover star because his story is bigger and more inspiring than that, and one



Impressed with Ford's determination and commitment? Think he's genuine world class? Get in touch to let us know about this or any other fitness issue @MensFitnessMag

we can all hopefully benefit from. Not just because of how he trains, but how he overcame the odds to put himself in the position to succeed.

I sincerely hope you enjoy this issue, my first as editor of *MF*. Success for me is making a magazine you, our readers, look forward to dropping through your letterbox each month or arriving fresh

in your local shop. Let me know what you like or love - and maybe even loathe - about *MF*, and we'll endeavour to work on our form and performance. Just maybe not on Christmas Day.

*Joe Barnes*

joe\_barnes@mensfitness.co.uk



@mf\_barnes

## IN THIS ISSUE Just some of the knowledgeable pros you'll find in *MF* this month



### PAVEL TSATSOULINE TRUE PIONEER

Belarus-born Tsatsouline is a groundbreaker. Credited with being one of the earliest

evangelists for martial arts fitness and with introducing kettlebell training to the West, he's also trained both Soviet Spetsnaz forces and US Marines. He explains why you'll get better results if you treat strength as a skill on p28.



### DAN LAWRENCE GROVES GURU

Lawrence spent years as an amateur boxer, but getting others in shape has proved his true

vocation. His training outfit is dedicated to producing impressive results - the finest example being George Groves, whose fitness he honed on the way to British and Commonwealth super middleweight titles. You'll find his fast fat loss workout on p114.



### TOM MYSLINSKI BIG CAT

'I thought I could do everything in the weight room as a player. What I realised is you have

to be in shape to play the game,' says Myslinski. After a nomadic NFL playing career, he's established as S&C coach of the Jacksonville Jaguars, where - among other things - he's revolutionised the players' nutrition. Find out more on p127.



# THE MFEERS

The staff and readers of *Men's Fitness* are always in the thick of the action



**Sam, fitness editor**  
**#firefighterfit**

Heart attacks – not burning buildings – are the biggest threat to firefighters' lives around the globe, which is why 555 Fitness was set up to help boost their cardiovascular fitness. I assumed the role for a month (minus the cat-rescuing heroics) and followed their daily workouts. Find out what training like a fireman can do for the average man on p120.



**Matt, features writer**  
**#whodareswins**

I took to the Brecon Beacons in Wales with The Special Forces Experience to see just how tough the routes on SAS selection are. The terrain may not look too daunting but the steep, uneven ground was punishing on my ankles. Plus, wearing a 10kg Bergen made me feel about as graceful as a walrus on stilts. Find out more on p68.



**Max, head of digital content**  
**#Transportertraining**

He's taken over from Jason Statham to play the new Transporter, so I went for a park workout with Ed Skrein to see how he transformed from rapper to action star. Unfortunately, no lead-pipe-wielding gangs jumped us to truly put his new skills to the test, but he told us plenty about his training as you can read on p24.



**Alistair, Optimum Nutrition Upgrader**  
**#UPGRADE**

Working on my lifting technique with coach Andy Edwards has paid off – my three-rep max back squat has jumped from 145kg to 172.5kg, and I'm about to enter the first qualifying round for the Battle Of the Beasts competition feeling fitter, stronger and faster than ever. Check out my progress on p76.



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Photography Steve Neaves Grooming Laura Tucker using Clinique for Men, Kiehl's and Fudge Urban Styling Will Barnes

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## Q How much should I be sweating in the gym?

Mark, Hertfordshire

It's not as simple as 'more sweat = better workout'. 'Don't rely on it to show how hard you're working - not everyone is the same,' says Carl Wallace, a personal trainer at PureGym (puregym.com). 'Also, sweat's more indicative when doing high-intensity workouts, but weights and low-intensity exercise should be gauged through fatigue and muscle pain.' Just make sure you're hydrated: weigh yourself before and after your workout, and glug enough water to make up the weight you've lost.

## Q I sometimes feel my morning coffee is getting less effective. Is that likely?

Andrew, Devon

It may be because it's messing with your body's cortisol levels. According to a 2009 study, your levels of this hormone are at their highest in the morning to give you an energy boost when you need to get going. A morning coffee doesn't add to that effect but replaces the cortisol boost with a caffeine one. Your body begins to expect the caffeine and produces less cortisol as a result. If you really want to feel a boost from your flat white, drink it between 10am and midday.



## Q When can I get an activity tracker that knows what moves I'm doing?

Iraklis, Manchester

You might have to wait a little while longer - but trackers are getting smarter. For example, the Moov Now (moov.cc) has 3D sensors that track its positioning. That means it not only knows that it's moving, but where it's moving to and from. So in theory it can tell the difference between you doing a press-up and a squat, or even swimming and riding a bike.

# MFAQ

EVERY MONTH WE ANSWER THE KEY FITNESS QUESTIONS

Run for the hills - or rest in an altitude training tank - if you want to improve your performance



## Q I'm training to improve my off-road running, particularly in the hills. Will I get better results from travelling to train in the Alps or an altitude training tank?

Nev, Cambridge

Impressive dedication, Nev. 'You can effectively recreate altitude training in a tank or chamber,' says Luke Worthington, strength and conditioning coach at The Third Space in London (thethirdspace.com). 'But the main benefits are from the recovery. An athlete at an altitude camp trains and lives at altitude, so adaptation occurs faster and to a greater degree than in someone who trains in a tank. To maximise use of a chamber, stay inside until your heart and breathing rate return to resting levels.'



### STAR PRIZE

MF's Star Letter wins this USN kit bundle

WORTH £100!



### GET IN TOUCH

Got a fitness question?



MensFitnessMagazine



@MensFitnessMag

using the hashtag #MFAQ

## last issue's issues

Q The sleep expert in your biohacking article (MF September) says you need seven to eight hours' sleep. I heard that Margaret Thatcher and other powerful people only needed four. If I did that, would I become prime minister?

Blake, Somerset

There's a genetic trait affecting 1-3% of people that means they can survive on less than five hours a night. If you don't have this quirk, you need your seven hours. It's not something you can learn - a study at the University of Central Florida found that while many people try to mimic this sleeping pattern, their only reward is chronic sleep deprivation.





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MILANO 2013



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## THE NEW ITALIAN CROSSOVER

Fuel consumption figures for Fiat 500X Range in mpg (l/100km): Urban 32.5 (8.7) – 60.1 (4.7); Extra Urban 49.6 (5.7) – 74.3 (3.8); Combined 42.2 (6.7) – 68.9 (4.1). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 157 – 109 g/km. Fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures based on standard EU tests for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.



# THE BIG PICTURE

## Does this terrify you?

You've got to have your mind in the right place when you're competing at the highest level. Unfortunately for anyone playing rugby against New Zealand, having a team of giant men shouting at you in unison as they perform the haka war dance makes that task harder. 'It's not going to scare anyone,' says performance coach Andy Barton (thesportingmind.com). 'But it creates a big advantage because it dictates the rhythm before the game as well as when the match starts. Essentially, you're playing on their terms.' Add to that the torrential downpour that featured in the 2014 Hong Kong rugby sevens tournament and you're facing a dramatic – and intimidating – sight. And it's one that any team with ambitions to win this year's World Cup will have to face head-on to overcome favourites and defending champions the All Blacks.

Words Matt Huckle Photography Getty

DJ Forbes has captained the All Blacks Sevens team since 2006, which includes leading this team to victory in the 2014 tournament

Ambrose Curtis was named IRB Sevens Rookie of the Year in his first year of playing for New Zealand in 2013







The haka most commonly used in rugby is called 'Ka Mate'. The leader chants 'Ka mate, ka mate' ('I may die, I may die') and the players respond 'Ka ora, ka ora' ('I may live, I may live')





**TOYOTA**

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**BETTER** WAY

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driving again.

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more attractive.

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two isn't bad.



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WARRANTY

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# UPGRADE

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## IMMUNISE YOURSELF AGAINST RUDENESS

**Bad attitudes are contagious - and unhealthy.  
 Build your defences to keep your cool**

Next time you feel the red mist descend, stop before running your mouth or hammering out a furious email. Shortness of temper is as infectious as the common cold, and you may just have been the latest to contract it.

Research published in the *Journal Of Applied Psychology* found that test subjects who had to deal with

impolite people kept the bad vibes alive during their next interactions. Being rude won't just make you a nightmare to be around - it also raises levels of the stress hormone cortisol, which has side effects from high blood pressure to hair loss.

So how do you stop the spread - and the consequent effects on your health? 'Stop and think how

happy you would be seeing yourself acting negatively,' says cognitive behavioural therapist Lucy-Ann Henry. 'Next, calmly ask whoever's being rude to you why they're acting like that and what you can do to help them. People often don't realise the effect they have on others until afterwards, or if they're pulled up on it at the time.'

Words: Max Anderton Photography: Stock





# OVERCOME OBSTACLES WITH EASE

Dirty Dozen Races co-founder Doug 'The Beard' Spence on the common obstacle course race fails he sees - and how to avoid them

## FAIL 2

### LACK OF CONFIDENCE

'The start is usually the hardest bit, so bear that in mind if you feel like giving up early. On monkey bars, for example, most people fall on the first few rungs - but that means the rest aren't as slippery.'



## FAIL 3

### BEING A DOORMAT

'If you're helping someone over a wall, form a plan before they start climbing so they don't tread on your face. "Step into my hands then onto my shoulders" is fine.'



## FAIL 1

### SWALLOWING MUDDY WATER

'Water obstacles are cold, so brace before you go in to avoid inhaling any. When submerged, breathe out slowly to keep your airways silt-free.'

## TRAIN YOUR TICKER

Work out more efficiently by listening to the body's most important muscle

It's World Heart Day on 29th September - but every day's a good day to improve cardio health.

'A heart rate monitor indicates how intensely your body is working, helping you burn fat or build aerobic endurance,' says Dr Phil Maffetone, a heart rate training coach since 1979.

'Your overall heart function will too improve as well as your athletic performance.'



Keep within target zones with the **POLAR FT1** (£47, polar.com) - the entry-level device from the inventors of the first ever wireless HRM all the way back in 1982.



You don't need a phone or watch with the **TICKR X WORKOUT TRACKER** (£80, wahoofitness.com) - just strap it on and its memory will store your sessions.



There's no chest strap required with the **FITBIT CHARGE HR** (£120, fitbit.com), which also doubles as an activity tracker with phone call notifications.

# FITNESS NEWS

## TESTOSTERONE

The charity Talking TDS has just released figures showing that 700,000 men in the UK have low levels. Here are five science-based ways to ensure you're not one of them



### EAT FATS

Go for monounsaturated (olive oil, almonds, avocados, peanut butter) and saturated fats (red meat, coconut oil, egg yolks, dark chocolate).



### AVOID MACHINES

Exercises such as squats, bench presses and deadlifts stimulate a greater testosterone response than machine moves that isolate specific muscles.



### TIME IT RIGHT

Workouts of more than an hour lower your levels, and research has shown that short rest periods between sets (one minute rather than three) are best.



### HIT THE SACK

When recording male sleeping patterns, participants' testosterone levels increased the longer they slept. Seven to nine hours a night is recommended.

# 30%

IS THE AMOUNT YOU CAN BOOST YOUR TESTOSTERONE TEMPORARILY BY PLAYING FOOTBALL, ONE STUDY FOUND





# FEEL THE BURN, NOT THE EARPHONES.

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## MASTER THE ART OF... SMOKING MEAT

Cook low and slow like a pro with the help of the British BBQ Society's Toby Shea

This summer saw an explosion in the number of people swapping carbonised sausages for American classics such as chicken wings, ribs and brisket. 'All you need is a barbecue with a lid,' says Shea. 'Move the meat so it's not over the heat source and let the smoke do the cooking.' Woodchips add flavour, but don't overdo it. 'Any more than a small handful and the taste becomes acrid,' says Shea. His last tip for smoky perfection: 'Chill out. Don't fuss over the temperature, just keep the barbecue closed and only check it when the minimum cooking time (see below) has passed. Once it's ready, wrap the meat in foil and leave it in - it'll stay moist for hours.' Trust us, you'll never go back to burned bangers again.

### MINIMUM COOKING TIMES

SPARE RIBS

CHICKEN WINGS

BEEF BRISKET



**6 HRS**

**2½ HRS**

**2½ HRS**  
(per 500g)

## WHEN ORGANIC MATTERS

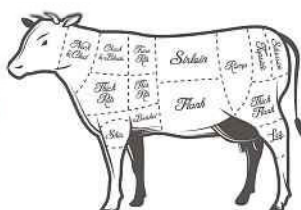
September is National Organic Harvest Month, but it makes more of a difference for some produce than it does for others.

If you're going to splash your hard-earned cash, these three foods have the biggest nutritional bang for your buck.



### APPLES

**Why?** Non-organic apples have the highest pesticide level of any food



### BEEF

**Why?** It's got twice as much heart-healthy omega 3 and vitamin E



### MILK

**Why?** It contains far lower levels of moob-inducing oestrogen

## WATCH WASTE, SAVE POUNDS

The UK tops the chart of EU food dumpers. Minimise your contribution with these life-extending storage hacks



Life  
extension  
2-3 days

### SAYONARA SALAD SLUDGE

Fed up with finding gunk at the bottom of the bag? Us too. It's caused by a lack of airflow. Punch a few holes in the plastic - problem solved.

### FAREWELL SOGGY SWEET POTATOES

They actually go bad quicker in the fridge because cool air turns starch to sugar. Keep them in a cupboard instead.



Life  
extension  
1 week

### BYE BYE BROWN BANANAS

Wrap the stems in plastic to stop them going soft too quickly. Just don't wrap all of them - you need some to brown for cakes and shakes.



Life  
extension  
5-6 days

### AU REVOIR AVOCADO MUSH

Put half-eaten ones in an airtight container with a piece of white onion. The sulphur slows the transformation.



Life  
extension  
3-4 days

**30.8%** of all food bought in the UK is binned, with each of us throwing away an average of **70kg** every year. That adds up to **7 million tonnes**, costing the average UK household **£470** a year





## ***Meet the New Vitamix S30***

---

The new Vitamix S30 quickly blends fresh, whole ingredients into breakfast, lunch and dinner. The S30 comes with two containers—a 600 ml blend-and-go beverage bottle with flip-top lid and a 1.2 litre container for small batches of soups, sauces, frozen desserts and more. Now high-performance blending fits easily into any home kitchen. Available in a wide range of colours including Red, Brushed Stainless, Cream, Black, White, Daybreak Blue and Sour Apple Green.



[www.vitamix.co.uk](http://www.vitamix.co.uk)



# Power walk

**Push your limits, not your luck, with the walking overhead lunge**

For the functional fitness in-crowd, the overhead squat is an entry requirement: a full-body lift that works everything from leg strength to core control. Unfortunately, it's not exactly beginner-friendly - anyone with below-average shoulder or ankle flexibility will find themselves struggling. Enter the overhead walking lunge. This move gets you used to controlling weight overhead but places less stress on your joints and requires slightly less balance. 'Do it with an empty bar as a warm-up before the rest of your session once or twice a week,' suggests strength coach James Adamson. Once you've got it nailed, you can graduate to the full overhead squat.



**A**

## How to do it

SETS 3 DISTANCE 20M

Hold a barbell with a shoulder-width grip, then press it overhead, keeping your arms in line with your body and pushing your head between your upper arms. Take a big step forward, keeping your front knee in line with your toes and letting your back knee gently touch the ground. Bring your rear leg up, and continue into another lunge so you walk forward. For your second and third sets, grip the bar with hands slightly wider apart.



**B**

## BONE UP

According to a recent University of Missouri study, six months of targeted exercise is enough to reverse bone loss. Here's your anti-osteoporosis prescription

### JUMP

'Jumping puts your bones and joints under pressure, forcing growth,' says trainer Tom Eastham (w10performance.com). Do three sets of 10 jump squats as a warm-up before lifting - or just in your own home.

### LIFT

'Keeping most of your body under the weight will force your body to grow,' says Eastham. Use the dumbbell front squat: keep the dumbbells at your shoulders as you squat as low as possible, then stand up.

### ...THEN DO BOTH

Combining resistance moves with explosive ones - technically known as 'contrast training' - lets you recruit more fast-twitch fibres. Do five weighted squats, then five unweighted jump squats to finish.





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Puresseentiel Muscles & Joints Roller is a medical device bearing the CE mark. Read the instructions before use.

\* % of people satisfied. Clinical efficacy study and satisfaction tests conducted on 43 people during 4 weeks.



# Healthy fried chicken

It exists!

Bin the fast food and make this simple **MF**-approved version



Just because the Colonel invented it doesn't mean popcorn chicken has to be a deep-fried nutritional disaster. In fact, with some smart recipe upgrades - including swapping

greasy, processed breadcrumbs for protein-rich flaked almonds - you can easily turn this chicken-shop staple into a healthy home-made feast in less time than it'd take to collect it from the shop. Fast and nutritious food? We guess *that's* what they mean by 'Winner, winner, chicken dinner'.

## POPCORN CHICKEN WITH CHILLI AND CORIANDER YOGURT DIP

### INGREDIENTS (SERVES 1)

1 chicken breast, chopped into chunks / 2tbsp chopped almonds / 2tbsp flaked almonds / 1tsp sesame seeds / 1tsp smoked paprika / 1 large egg / 2tbsp wholemeal flour / 2tbsp coconut oil  
**DIP** 50g Greek yogurt / 1 medium chilli, deseeded and chopped / 1tsp lemon juice / 2tbsp chopped coriander

### TO MAKE

- Place the almonds, sesame seeds and paprika in a shallow dish. Whisk the egg in another shallow dish.
- Evenly coat the chicken with the flour, then dip each piece into the whisked egg, then the almond and seed mix, pressing it gently until it's evenly coated all over.
- Heat the oil in a pan over a medium heat. Cook the chicken for five to six minutes, turning frequently, until it's golden all over.
- Mix the chilli and coriander with the lemon juice and yogurt, then serve with the chicken.

CALORIES  
**598**

PROTEIN  
**61g**

CARBS  
**22g**

FAT  
**30g**

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'GOOD' HDL  
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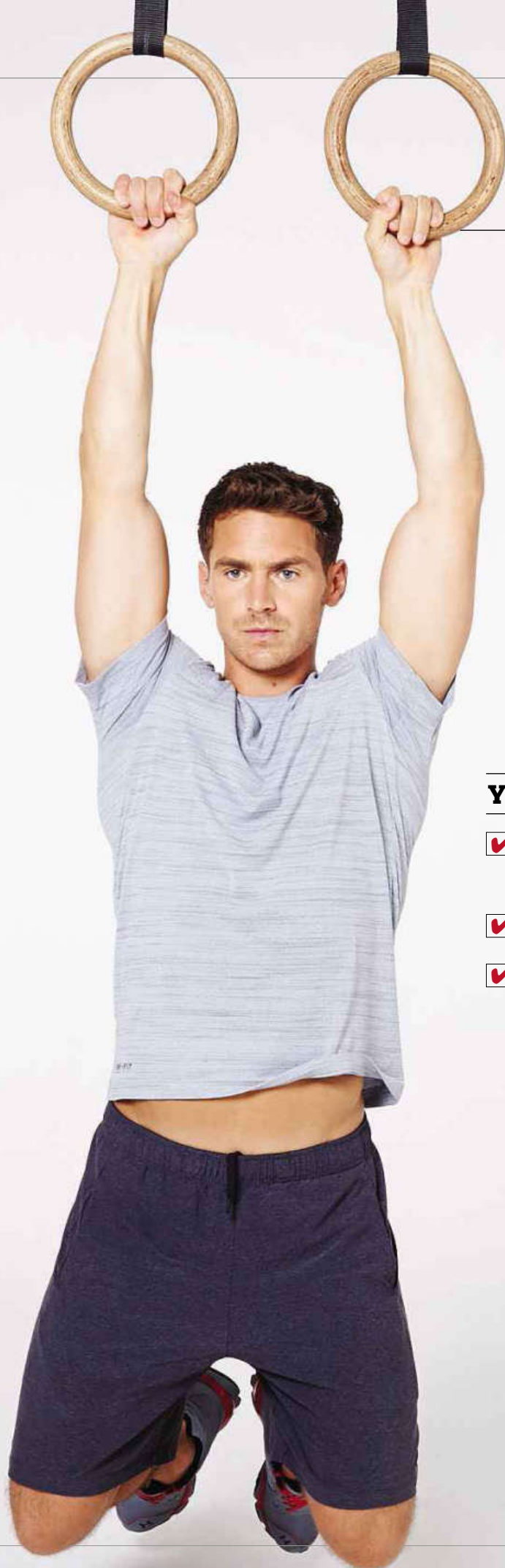




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- ☒ **CO-ORDINATION**



# HOW TO USE... GYMNASTICS RINGS

They're not just for showing off your agility.  
Put a ring on it for gains in strength, size and stability

If you're in the market for a training tool that combines strength, hypertrophy and health benefits, here's our proposal: get some rings. By adding instability to almost any move, they force your muscles to work in unexpected

ways - and by encouraging you to concentrate or risk a face-plant, they build the mind-muscle connection that experts agree is essential for making significant gains. 'You should start with movements that don't require any swinging,'

says Ryan Hurst of Gold Medal Bodies ([gmb.io](http://gmb.io)). 'They require less space, but they're also the best way to build strength and muscle.' Start by performing the workout below twice a week - and get ready to ring some changes.



## 1// FRONT SUPPORT

SETS 5 REPS 6

Jump into the 'top' position of a dip - elbows locked, rings close to your body, knuckles facing your sides. Hold for a second. Turn your knuckles out to feel the extra tension, then turn them back in.



## 2// PULL-UP

SETS 5 REPS 3

It's tougher than the bar version, but easier on your elbows. Start with your palms facing forward and brace your abs to minimise swinging. As you pull, twist your palms to face you. Pause at the top, then lower.



## 3// DIP

SETS 5 REPS 5

From the support position, bend your elbows and drop into a dip, lowering until your shoulders are just below your elbows. Leaning forward will work your chest - staying straight will build triceps strength. Mix both.



## 4// L-SIT

SETS 3 TIME 10SEC

This is a far better abs builder than sit-ups. From the 'support' position, bring your legs up until they're parallel to the floor, brace your abs and hold for ten seconds.



## 5// PRESS-UP

SETS 3 REPS 10

Much harder than the regular version. Lean forward holding the rings and lower until the edges touch your armpits, then press up. As you improve, lower until you're closer to the angle of a 'normal' press-up.



## 6// ROW

SETS 3 REPS 8

A move that engages your shoulders to keep them flexible and healthy. Hold the rings and lean back, keeping your body in a straight line. Focus on pulling your elbows behind you as you pull up to the rings.



*Ed Skrein,  
shot for MF,  
Wandsworth  
Common  
August 2015*





A run with...

# Ed Skrein

**32, British star of *The Transporter Refuelled*, rapper and swimming coach**

**Y**ou're the new *Transporter* in the rebooted movie series. As a kid did you ever imagine you would be an action star?

I always had a feeling I would do something big. I never knew what it was but I felt like something would happen to me.

**Sounds a little entitled...**

Nah, not in an entitled way. It's the first time I've verbalised it and I sound like an arsehole by saying it, but it's true. I never thought acting and martial arts would end up being the thing I'd do. In my mid-20s I'd never done either. You get to that age and you think your life is already going down a certain path. You might not know what it'll be like, but you're pretty sure what it won't be.

**And you were pretty sure it wouldn't be kicking arse in Hollywood?**

No, although when I look back now it feels like everything I did previously prepared me for it in some way. The endurance sports I did as a kid, the creative studies I did academically and the hobbies I had - they all feel as if they were building towards this.

**Has fitness always been your thing, then?**

It's always been a part of my life, but it was never integral until now. I was a competitive swimmer at county level when I was young. That's where I discovered a passion for competing. I love the adrenaline, turning nerves into energy and standing on the edge of the pool ready to go. I found the whole process exhilarating and even if the race didn't go as planned I'd still be pumped afterwards.

**What about the training side of it? Was that a passion too?**

At the time it felt like a chore. I had other priorities in my life. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, *X-Men* and football - stuff like that.

**But you still liked it enough to become a swimming coach later on?**

Yeah, but that was after I'd got some negative stuff out of my system and realised the positive effect swimming - or any kind of exercise - can have. I even helped open a swimming academy in Islington to encourage kids to get into it.

*Skrein asks to stop, and for a second I think he's already knackered but it turns out he just needs to tie*

*his shoelaces. MF takes the opportunity to change the subject and find out how hard filming fight scenes really is. After all, it's only a step up or two from dancing, isn't it?*

**You can't fake it when it comes to competitive swimming, but there's always a certain artifice to action films. How hard is it really?**

It doesn't matter that we're not really fighting - it's still hardcore. One scene in *The Transporter Refuelled* is set on top of a cliff. We filmed for 14 hours straight with a helicopter flying round blowing dust into our faces. I was wearing a suit with leather shoes and standing on top of a rock fighting all day long. I refused to get down until we were done. I said, 'the stunt double can wait over there and have a coffee, but I'm staying exactly where I am and seeing this through to the end'.

**An easy day for him then...**

Exactly. It was the same with *Deadpool* [the upcoming Marvel film in which Skrein stars alongside Ryan Reynolds]. I trained twice a day, six days a week, one session with an NFL strength and conditioning coach and one with the stunt team - it was hard work. When you've put that much into something you want to prove that it was all worth it. It's a wonderful feeling when you can come out of it at the end and say, 'I did that, and a couple of months ago I couldn't'.

**'I WAS IN A SUIT WITH LEATHER SHOES, STANDING ON A ROCK FIGHTING'**

**You sound like one of those guys who picks up all physical stuff annoyingly quickly.**

Not at all. At school my best mate Ahmed was a natural at everything and I was just trying to keep up. If we played tennis he'd still win even if he used his left hand. I used to count his

keepie-ups and he could do two or three hundred. To this day my record is seven. I was never used to being the best and I think that helps inform my work ethic today. I'm proud when I hear my directors and stunt co-ordinators say most actors don't work as hard as me.

**MF'd work hard too if we knew we were being filmed and any tiny mistake would be visible to everyone...**

Yeah, that was in my head the whole time, especially because I went into *The Transporter Refuelled* with no martial arts experience. Getting tired wasn't a problem, but I had to learn technique. Luckily, this stuntman called Stéphane Orsolani mentored me. He would come up to me between takes and say, 'watch your elbow, make sure you keep that left hand up, you can't headbutt like that'. It was brutal, but that's the way I like to work. I hate the idea of being around people who say something's





MF's Max tries to match Skrein stride for stride



Martial arts legend Bob Breen got Skrein into fighting shape for *Deadpool*



## THE SKREIN LINE ED'S CV HIGHLIGHTS

**2004** Releases first EP *Mind Out*

**2005** Graduates from Central St Martins with a BA (hons) in fine art

**2007** Debut album *The Eat Up* is released

**2009** Swims the English Channel in a relay team to raise money for the NSPCC

**2012** Helps open a children's swimming academy

**2012** Stars in Plan B's movie *Ill Manors*

**2012** Awarded '2013 Star of Tomorrow' by *Screen International* magazine

**2013** Plays Daario Naharis in season three of *Game Of Thrones*

**2015** Takes over from Jason Statham for *The Transporter Refuelled*

**2016** Will support Ryan Reynolds in *Deadpool*

good when it's not. I respect people who know more than me and tell me when I'm doing something wrong.

*As we round the corner there's a short, sharp incline just off the path. Skrein nods towards it and a silent agreement is made. We dash up it, racing to the top side by side, before looping around and doing it again, and again. By the fourth time, Skrein edges ahead. Just about.*

**OK you win, that's enough of that. Tell me how you prepared for another action-heavy part as Ajax in *Deadpool*.**

I found out I would be fighting with two axes, so the studio put me on to a guy named Bob Breen. Bob's a legend in martial arts: he's 65 years old and introduced jeet kune do [a hybrid martial arts system founded by Bruce Lee] to England. He's a humble, gracious gentleman, totally modest. Most importantly, he's an absolute tower of knowledge, so I got this incredible foundation from working the basics over and over. By the time I was on set they told me to stop doing it so correctly because my character would fight with a dirtier style. But if I hadn't had that form to be able to break down, it would have just looked sloppy.

**Bob's here to do a bit of pad work with us - so you're still training with him now that filming's wrapped?**

One hundred percent. Bob and his team at 4D Combat are incredible [one of their instructors is Steve Payne, world number four at Brazilian jiu jitsu]

and I want to do my belts in kali - Filipino knife and stick fighting. I'll also be speaking to them right after they've watched the movie to get their feedback once they've seen the results of their hard work on screen.

**So are you as excited about *Deadpool* as the internet fanboys seem to be?**

No - I'm more excited. When I was a kid I collected *Spawn*, *X-Men Age Of Apocalypse*, stuff like that. I'm massively into comics and I'm telling you: this is a superhero movie done right.

**Did you already know all about *Deadpool* before you got the part?**

A fair bit, but I read more to find out about Ajax. I spent hundreds of dollars in this comics shop in Vancouver and ended up having literally every *Deadpool* comic ever in my apartment. That whole time was a joy for me. I love training, and getting paid to do it is amazing enough, let alone getting paid to read comics too. It was a dream job.

*Two guys in 4D Combat hoodies wave to Skrein. In short order MF gets a crash course in stand-up grappling from Payne while Skrein hits pads with Breen. It's a surreal situation. Breen once studied under Dan Inosanto, who learned jeet kune do from Bruce Lee - so not only has MF just run with a Hollywood star, we're now only a couple of degrees of separation from training with the most famous martial artist ever.*

**The Transporter Refuelled is released on 4th September**





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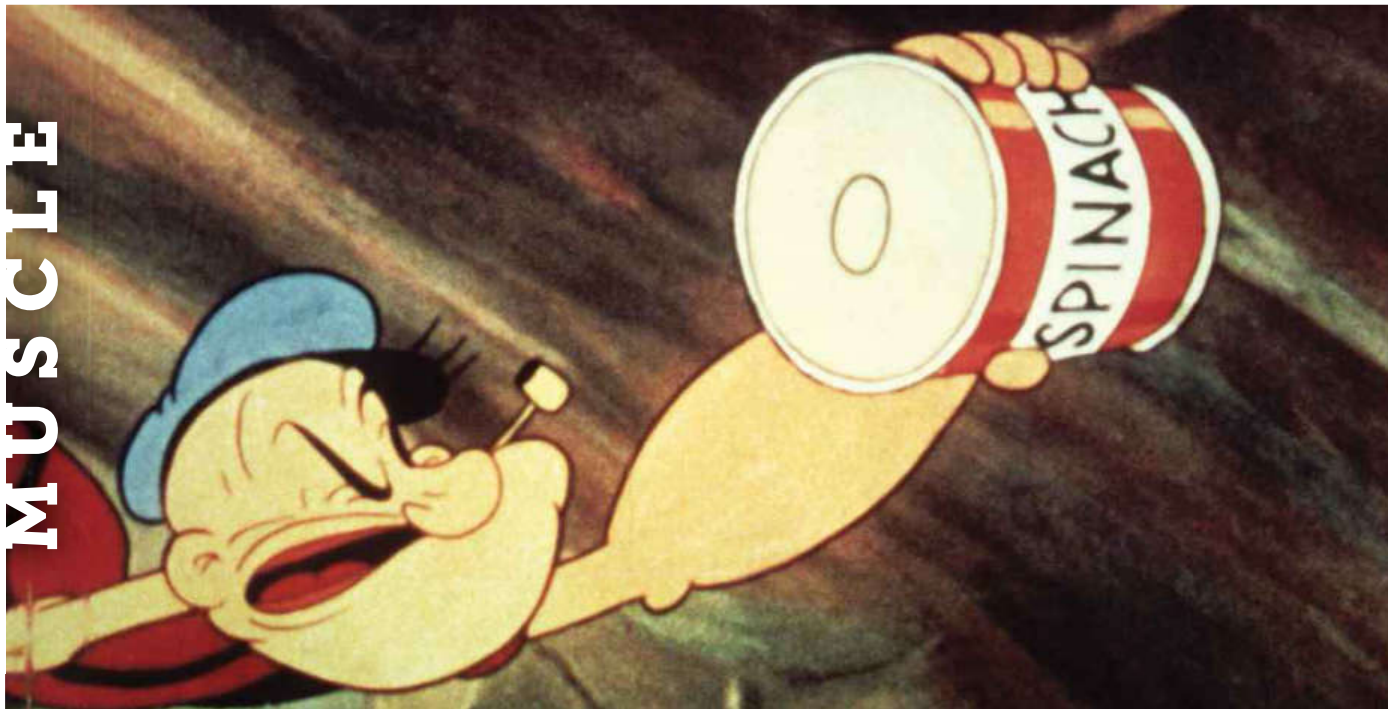
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## Can I really get stronger instantly?

### THE EXPERT


**NAME**

PAVEL TSATSOULINE

**SPECIALITY**

STRENGTH & CONDITIONING

The kettlebell master and StrongFirst chairman believes that treating strength as a skill will lead to immediate improvements

For a lot of gym-goers, lifting weights means mindlessly knocking out reps while paying little or no attention to the intricacies of the exercises. Although you might build some muscle with this approach, you're more likely to remain weak and unco-ordinated. The reason? Strength is a skill, and if you want to master it, you need to be 100% focused on what you're doing throughout your workout, not just fitting in lazy sets between bouts of Facebook-checking.

The skill of strength has two aspects. The first is inter-muscular co-ordination, which relates to the posture, joint angles and timing required to perform every lift with correct form - technique, essentially. Attempting to lift heavy weights without developing this first will stunt your strength gains, and could lead to serious injury.

Training with a PT or a partner who can film you lifting will provide objective feedback for assessing your form and working out how to improve it. If neither of those is an option, try an app such as Coach's Eye (coachseye.com) or advice from an online community like Reddit's r/weightroom.

### Tense up

The second aspect - and the one that's more commonly overlooked - is intra-muscular co-ordination. This is the process of contracting your muscles harder, and tensing your body in the right places to make lifts more efficient (see box below). Before performing an upright barbell row, for example, you should lock your knees, squeeze your glutes and brace your abs as if you're about to be punched in the stomach. This creates a sort of standing plank position, which will neurologically amplify your strength and give your arms a rock-solid platform for lifting.

Learning to contract your muscles harder will enable you to recruit more muscle fibres when performing a specific

movement pattern. This in turn will increase the amount of weight you can lift and allow you to build serious strength.

Continually honing and improving these skills allows weightlifters and powerlifters to keep getting stronger for years without having to increase their bodyweight. The key isn't to keep adding more muscle - if it were, bodybuilders would be the strongest athletes of all - but learning how to squeeze more out of the muscles you've got.

If you treat strength as a skill and every trip to the gym as a practice session rather than a workout, you'll make immediate and continuing strength gains. Who doesn't want that?

**For more from Tsatsouline, visit [strongfirst.com](http://strongfirst.com)**

### GET STRENGTH SKILLS IN 5 EASY STEPS

Tsatsouline's tips will improve your barbell curl - and the principles can be applied to your other lifts too

**STEP 1 THE STANDING PLANK**

Stand holding a barbell with your arms straight. Lock your knees, tense your glutes and brace your core as hard as you can.

**STEP 2 THE ANTI-SHRUG**

Push your shoulders down by contracting your lats. Unless you're performing shrugs or Olympic lifts, your shoulders should never rise during a lift.

**STEP 3 THE CRUSH GRIP**

Grip the bar hard enough to turn your knuckles white. Creating this tension will help to fire up your biceps so they can contract harder.

**STEP 4 THE ACTIVE NEGATIVE**

Curl the barbell to your chest, then lower it by contracting your triceps as if doing a push-down. This helps strengthen your biceps.

**STEP 5 THE SHAKE-OUT**

Shake out your arms between sets to help clear hydrogen ions from your muscle fibres. This allows you to contract muscles harder in the next set.

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Dehydration and lack of blood flow to the gut can leave you with a severe case of the runs

## Why does running give you an upset stomach?

### THE EXPERT



**NAME**  
DR JUSTIN ROBERTS

**SPECIALITY**  
PERFORMANCE AND  
SPORTS NUTRITION

The senior lecturer in sport and exercise science at Anglia Ruskin University and keen long-distance runner explains why running can be hard on the gut

**F**orget your legs – it's the strain you put on your stomach when running that's more likely to leave you in trouble. There are two different types of stomach issue that can arise from running.

The first is called endotoxemia. When you're running and various body parts start jiggling around, it can cause a lack of blood flow to your gut. This creates a situation where you start to release toxins into the body, causing symptoms such as chronic gut cramping and nausea. Basically, it's not much different from having a really bad hangover, but without the fun part first.

#### Go probiotic

Endotoxemia is exacerbated the longer you run, but it can manifest after as little as half an hour if you're running at

about 85% of your maximum intensity. The research around this problem is still in its infancy, but one thing it has found is that taking probiotic supplements – in tablet or drink form – regularly in the 12 weeks leading up to a race significantly lowers the level of toxins in your system, which in turn alleviates the problems caused by endotoxemia.

We also know that almost everyone who trains has some level of endotoxemia – but the levels of toxins don't often reach critical levels, otherwise no-one would be entering any races.

#### Upset the odds

The other issue is what's often known as runner's trots. This may be more related to hydration, what's in your stomach at the time and how the gut responds to being jostled around. In the worst cases the result can be severe diarrhoea.

This is something that often happens when you run early in the morning and your gut and its contents are forced to move again soon after eight hours of rest. If you find this on your early-morning runs, the simplest solution is to avoid eating until after you've trained.

If you get the trots when you train at other times as well, the important thing is to make sure you're hydrated going into a session or race. Being dehydrated affects the way your body breaks down food, drinks and gels and makes stomach problems much more likely. And think about how you're hydrating too. It isn't only about the period immediately before the race – how and what you drink two or three days beforehand can also affect your hydration. You should be looking to drink between two and four litres a day outside of training. On top of that amount, drink about 500ml every hour when you're training. Necking a few pints of water the morning of the race isn't going to help.

**Find out more about Roberts's research at [anglia.ac.uk](http://anglia.ac.uk)**

### GET A STOMACH OF STEEL

Avoid mid-race stomach problems by preparing your body beforehand

#### THREE DAYS BEFORE THE RACE

'Don't try to change things this late,' says Roberts. 'Carb loading isn't necessary unless your intake up to the race has been low – less than 100g a day, say.'

#### THE DAY BEFORE THE RACE

'Eat lots of vegetables to keep your antioxidant levels up,' says Roberts. 'It can take around six weeks for your muscles to recover fully from a marathon, even if you feel OK. Good food will help shorten that recovery.'

#### RACE DAY

'Eat a breakfast of easily digested food, such as porridge, banana and honey, three hours before you race,' says Roberts. 'Then sip a sports drink diluted with water right up to the start.'

James Anderson

England's No.1  
wicket taker  
of all time\*

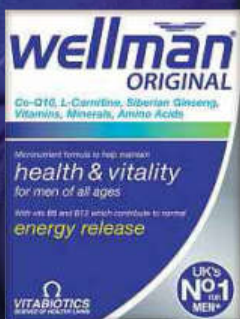
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*James*

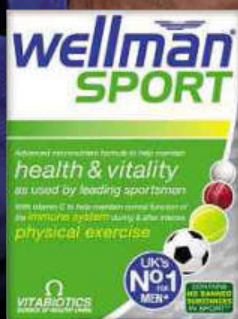
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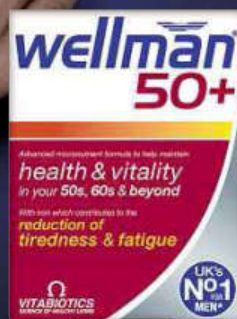
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## Is the Paleo diet due a rethink?

### THE EXPERT



**NAME**  
DR MARK HYMAN  
**SPECIALITY**  
FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE

Doctor and best-selling author Hyman recommends joining the 'pegan' movement, combining the best of the Paleo and vegan worlds, for a lean body

There's a lot to appreciate in the Paleo and vegan diets, but it's easy to get confused over how to implement them and lose some of the benefits.

Studies show that vegan diets help with weight loss, improve cholesterol levels and reverse diabetes. Paleo diets seem to do the same. So should you shun animal foods and eat only beans, grains and veggies, or should you eat meat and fat and give up grains and beans? The answer is to adopt the best research-supported features of each. That's where the pegan diet comes in.

#### Fruit and veg first

With the pegan diet, most of your food is non-starchy fruit and veg. The rest is made up of protein from healthy animal or vegetable sources, and from

healthy starches (see the box below). As a result, the diet has a low glycaemic load and is free of processed, sugary foods that hold your weight hostage.

You are providing your body with the essential nutrients – protein, healthy fats, fibre, phytonutrients – it needs. And you are eating whole, natural,

nutrient-dense foods that keep you full for fewer calories.

Alarm bells might ring about the fattening sugar in fruit but they needn't. Fructose in fruit is part of a complex web of nutrients and fibre that slows absorption and improves metabolism. Its effects are different from those of high-fructose additives such as corn sugar. Unless you eat massive amounts of fruit, fructose shouldn't be a problem.

#### Meat on the side

Meat plays a supporting role in the pegan diet. You should see it as a side dish, and consume only grass-fed and sustainably raised forms. Why? Processed beef contains more palmitic and myristic acid, which raises LDL (or 'bad') cholesterol

and increases inflammation. Grass-fed beef contains more cholesterol-neutral stearic acid, as well as protective omega 3 fats and vitamins A and D. Eating sustainably raised meat as part of a healthy diet helps raise 'good' HDL cholesterol, lower blood sugar, boost testosterone, cut belly fat and add muscle mass.

Cutting back on meat doesn't mean you have to give up on aspirations to build muscle – as long as you work hard in the gym. About a quarter of your plate should be sources of muscle-building protein. If you're an athlete or need more, you can bolster it with pegan-friendly sardines, anchovies, beans, eggs, nuts and seeds.

**For more information**  
visit [drhyman.com](http://drhyman.com)

### THE DAILY PEGAN MENU

#### Restructure your diet the pegan way to lose fat

'At least 50% of your plate – two to three portions per meal – will be non-starchy fruit and veg, like peas, mushrooms and avocados, and low glycaemic fruit like plums and grapefruit,' Hyman says. 'Another 25% will be protein from healthy animal sources

or plants, such as nuts. The remaining 25% will be healthy starches such as beans, non-gluten wholegrains like quinoa, or starchy vegetables including sweet potato and squash.'

#### BREAKFAST

Omelette with chicken and mushrooms. One grapefruit. A handful of brazil and cashew nuts.

#### LUNCH

Spinach and romaine lettuce salad with sardines, anchovies, kidney beans and avocado. Two plums.

#### DINNER

Grass-fed beef or ostrich burger (no bun) with sweet potato chips, tomatoes and red onion. Handful of cherries. Handful of pumpkin and sesame seeds.

SIGN UP  
NOW!



# THE OPTIMUM FITNESS CHALLENGE

Men's Fitness **ON** OPTIMUM  
NUTRITION

## ARE YOU UP FOR THE CHALLENGE?

### Bigger. Tougher. Faster.

The first Optimum Fitness Challenge is over - with the hugely impressive Andy McTaggart emerging victorious - but in part two, to be held on 3rd October 2015, there's still everything to play for. Competitors will tackle three different workouts on the day, and only the very fittest can win. For more information visit [mensfitness.co.uk/onchallenge](http://mensfitness.co.uk/onchallenge).

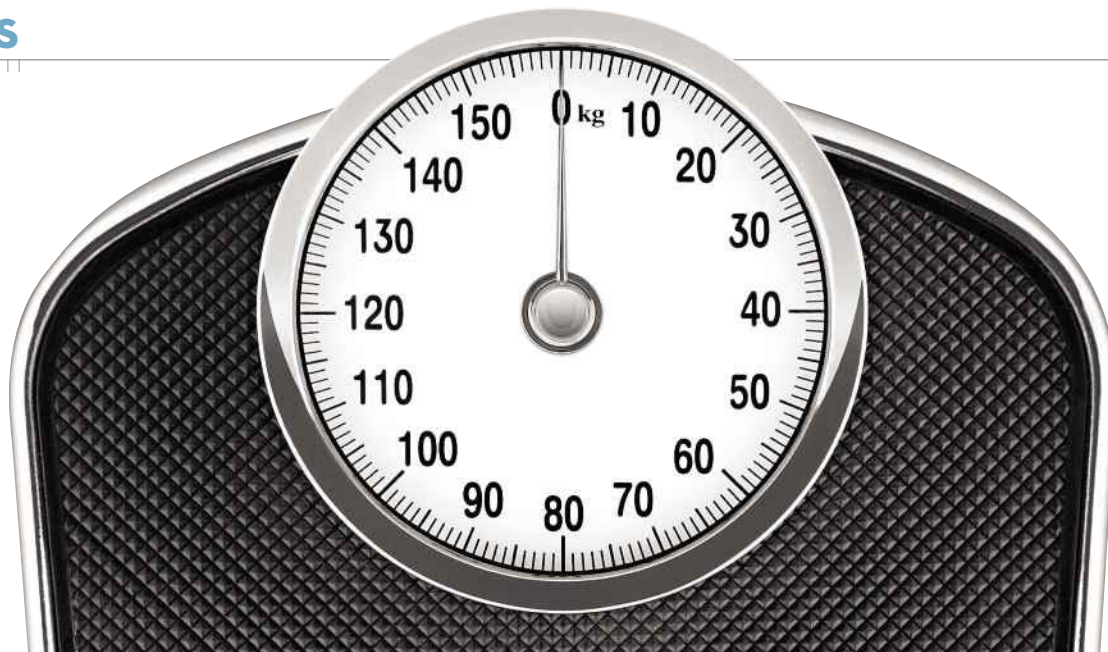
What's in it for you? As well as the bragging rights, you could win these great prizes...

## WIN

- A year's supply of Optimum Nutrition supplements worth £1,200
- Expert advice from an ON nutritionist
- A session with an ON ambassador
- An appearance in *Men's Fitness*
- A year's subscription to *Men's Fitness*

[MENSFITNESS.CO.UK/ONCHALLENGE](http://MENSFITNESS.CO.UK/ONCHALLENGE)





## Should you regularly weigh yourself?

A two-year Cornell University study found that frequent self-weighing is effective for losing weight and keeping it off, especially for men. A panel of experts give their opinions



**THE STUDY AUTHOR**  
**Professor David Levitsky,**  
*Professor of nutritional  
sciences and psychology  
at Cornell (cornell.edu)*

It used to be taught that you shouldn't weigh yourself daily, but we found just the reverse. Doing so forces you to be aware of the connection between your eating and your weight.

We didn't prescribe a particular method or diet. Everyone taking part in the study found their own way of losing the weight, whether they reduced portion size, stopped snacking or made healthier food choices.

Men are usually less aware of the cues in their environment that make them eat than women are. Stepping on the scale and seeing the consequence of their eating on a graph increases their sensitivity to these cues.



**THE CEO**  
**Phil Chant**  
*Managing director,  
BodyScan  
(bodyscanuk.com)*

Weighing yourself every day might make you more conscious of what you eat, but the basic premise of the study is flawed because it focuses on weight instead of body composition. People don't need to lose weight - they need to lose fat.

If you gain 4kg of muscle and lose 2kg of fat that's a great result, although your weight will have increased. Weighing yourself tells you very little of use about the changes in your body. Instead, get a body composition analysis such as a DEXA scan every three months and monitor what your body's actually composed of, instead of your relationship with gravity.



**THE WEIGHT-LOSS EXPERT**  
**Zoe Griffiths**  
*Head of public health,  
Weight Watchers  
(weightwatchers.co.uk)*

Regular weighing is a key part of weight loss success. Experts have found that when self-monitoring is used on a regular basis, the likelihood of weight loss success increases. People who successfully lose weight, and keep it off, often cite these strategies as important. They also report that, over time, making these strategies habitual becomes easier and requires less attention.

We recommend sticking with the same weighing-in time each week. If you're tempted to weigh in more frequently, bear in mind that bodyweight fluctuates over time, with variations observed even over the course of one day.



**THE PERSONAL TRAINER**  
**Chris Walton**  
*Director of personal  
training, Embody Fitness  
(embodyfitness.co.uk)*

No matter what a client's goals are, we never consider weight as a significant measure of improvement. Our goal is always to reduce body fat, and you can't find out if that's happening by stepping on a scale.

Daily fluctuations in weight occur owing to diet and hydration, and people dieting can lose muscle as well as fat - it may look good on the scale, but that can be bad for long-term fat loss, and indeed health. Having said that, weighing yourself daily can probably help modulate eating habits on a subconscious level, and that's probably what accounts for the success of the people in this study.

### MF SAYS...

Regular weigh-ins might help with weight loss, but there's no need to step on the scales unless you're only just embarking on a mission to shed excess kilos. Muscle is about three times heavier than fat and most people find they put on a little weight when they start exercising regularly, especially when doing strength training. Bin the scales and measure your progress by gym PBs. If you still want to measure physiological adaptations, analyse your body composition (fat to muscle ratio) - it's the only way to gain a true insight.

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*Mindful  
Chef*

# The Healthy Alternative

No pastas, no white rice, no bread

---

As a gift for Men's Fitness readers, use the code **MENSFITNESS** upon checkout to receive  
**50% off** your first box at **mindfulchef.com**

**No traipsing around the supermarket**  
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**Healthy lean recipes changing weekly**

Results from sticking to our plans include: sustained weight loss, muscle growth, increased fitness, increased and more stable energy levels, improved sleep, clearer skin and healthier looking hair and a general feeling of well-being



UPGRADE

# KIT BAG

GAME-CHANGING FITNESS GEAR AND TECH

The distinctive shape is a legacy of the pig's bladders used in the first balls in the 1800s

## Play with style

Celebrate rugby coming home for the World Cup  
by going back to the game's roots

Going vintage doesn't have to mean browsing overpriced tweed jackets in charity shops while avoiding eye contact with pencil-moustached men. The official ball of the Rugby World Cup may feature Nasa-level tech to improve grip and aerodynamics, but this leather version has been hand-stitched using traditional techniques and painstakingly finished so no two are exactly the same. The only omission in terms of authenticity is the pig's bladder, although maybe that's just because no-one was up for inflating it (back in the day the bladder was blown up while still stinking fresh). With urine odours a thing of the past, it's time to ditch the branded plastic and invest in a real leather ball. It's so beautiful you'll have to raise your catching game just to ensure it doesn't get covered in muck.

*£63 [notonthehighstreet.com](http://notonthehighstreet.com)*



Men'sFitness **IF** Fitness First



# RISE TO THE CHALLENGE

*The UK's biggest gym-based competition is back*

## NOW LIVE!

Take on the UK's ultimate gym challenge this summer to find out if you can rise to the challenge and be crowned FitBrit 2015 Champion.

## NEW FOR 2015

- **NEW CIRCUIT** Nine different moves make for our toughest, most well-rounded fitness event ever.
- **NEW CATEGORIES** Elite, Amateur, Masters and Team divisions mean anyone can compete.

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You can take on the FitBrit challenge at any Fitness First gym in the UK with a five-day free pass. To claim your pass, go to [fitnessfirst.co.uk/mf5day](http://fitnessfirst.co.uk/mf5day)  
Terms and conditions apply

FIND OUT MORE AT  
**MENSFITNESS.CO.UK/FITBRIT**

**Men'sFitness**

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women's  
**fitness**

# Choose a better bell

Not all kettlebells are created equal. Get one with improved handling

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR



### THE BELL

Big is usually better – it'll sit nicely on your forearm during overhead moves, and won't bruise you when 'snatched'.

### THE BASE

A flat base is more stable when moves involve balancing your bodyweight on the bell.

### THE HANDLE

Make sure it's wide enough for two-handed swings. Texture helps you grip – but nothing too abrasive.

## HOW WE TESTED

MF's Joel did the same 20-minute workout of cleans, presses, squats, renegade rows and swings with each kettlebell to test for grip (especially when sweaty), ergonomics, stability and the all-important 'doesn't bruise your forearms' factor. We used a 20kg bell, which is the best all-round option for most men – you'll outgrow a 16kg one, and 24kg might be too heavy for pressing.

①

### BODYMAX CAST IRON

The budget option. Its solid, chunky handle works for any move (liquid chalk recommended), and it's ideally shaped for goblet squats. The flat surfaces on both sides don't suit snatching, but this is still a beautiful piece of kit for the price. £33 [powerhouse-fitness.co.uk](http://powerhouse-fitness.co.uk)

②

### FITMAD VINYL COVERED

The powder-coated handle (also the widest on test) makes two-handed swings effortless, but the vinyl coating got dinged up early and the uneven base doesn't inspire confidence during bear crawls. It's probably the most home-safe option for anyone who has a hardwood floor, though. £70 [fitness-mad.com](http://fitness-mad.com)

③

### JORDAN NEOPRENE

Perfect balancing, a round face and a hard rubber coating made this the most forearm-friendly bell on test, although the chunky handle may be a touch too smooth for high-intensity training. Not one to practise your bottoms-up press with, but it's the best choice for home workouts. £48 [jordanfitness.co.uk](http://jordanfitness.co.uk)

④

### WOLVERSON BLACK SERIES

The winner. A super-flat machined base means extra stability for renegade rows and bear crawls, while its gritty, chip-resistant finish makes for easy handling, even during high-rep sets of cleans. £50 [wolverson-fitness.co.uk](http://wolverson-fitness.co.uk)

Words: Joel Snape Photography: Henry Carter







#### DRY DIGITS

Gripping the handlebars turns pinkies purple as soon as the temperature drops. The Altura Night Vision prevents this by keeping your mitts warm and dry.  
£14 [evanscycles.com](http://evanscycles.com)



## Cycling kit to be seen in (literally)

#### SMART HYDRATION

The inner jacket that gives the Fire & Ice bottle its dazzlingly bright reflectivity also acts as a thermal lining to keep your water cold. BPA-free materials also stop that nasty plastic taste ruining your mid-ride refreshment.  
£12 [johnlewis.com](http://johnlewis.com)



#### VISIBLE PROTECTION

Cycling apparel has a tendency towards brightness that makes this HardnutZ Stealth helmet appear uncharacteristically restrained. Shine a light on it, however, and all that changes as 15 reflective panels turn your head into a mini beacon.  
£30 [halfords.com](http://halfords.com)



#### REFLECTIVE RUCKSACK

If fashion and function got drunk and had a lovechild, this might be it. Rapha's unimaginatively named Rucksack keeps its contents dry and safe with padded compartments and water-repellent fabric. There's spine cushioning for comfort and reflective pin dots to make you impossible to miss.  
£150 [rapha.cc](http://rapha.cc)





## SHINY SHOES

For the Air Max's 25th birthday Nike has released new models including the Ultra Moire, with an easy-wipe perforated upper to prevent sweaty feet and bright reflective panels for visibility. £110 [footasylum.com](http://footasylum.com)



It's getting darker and colder, but that's no reason to send your bike into hibernation. Get this lot and stay warm without having to cover yourself in neon everything

## FLASHY JACKET

Most reflective clothing can make you look like someone who refuses to believe nu-rave ever died. The waterproof Sugoi Zap sidesteps that issue by being covered in micro-glass beads that illuminate the entire jacket, but only when struck by artificial light. £110 [sugoi.com](http://sugoi.com)



## ROAD-READY JEANS

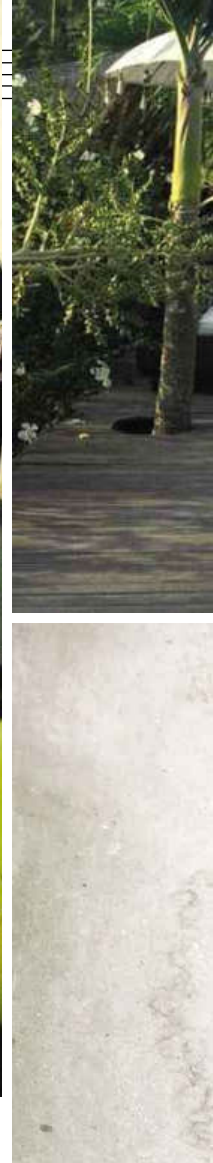
Made from extra durable water-resistant stretch fabric, the Levi's Commuter solves the problems associated with cycling in jeans. And it's not only you who benefits, thanks to a higher cut that prevents your bum crack making an unwanted cameo in everyone else's commute. £84 [levi.com](http://levi.com)





# Can an app replace my PT?

Four personal trainers test the latest digital coaches threatening to put them out of a job



1

## TESTER

### The MMA coach Christian Vila

He specialises in building fighter's fitness, but kettlebell expert Vila also offers one-to-one sessions to the masses (cvpt.co.uk).



## THE APP

### Touchfit: GSP £4 (iOS)

Octagon legend Georges St-Pierre promises to get you in the best shape of your life by adapting all your workouts on the fly.

## INTERFACE

'The clear instructions, large buttons and an intuitive layout make this effortless to use, even mid-workout. But having to "touch in" after each exercise slows the workout down, and isn't easy to do after a round of pike press-ups.'

2

### The functional fitness expert Sam Burrows

Personal trainer Burrows is a certified calisthenics instructor and shares workouts and moves with his loyal Instagram following (@sbpt\_fitness).

## 8Fit

Free, in-app purchases  
(iOS, Android, Windows)

Share your goal with this digital pretender to the PT throne and get a customised exercise and diet plan you can do from home.

8fit

'It's easy to find your way around 8Fit, but it looks basic with a stripped-down, minimal aesthetic that's not inspiring in the slightest. Fitness is fun, but no-one seems to have told whoever designed this.'

3

### The drill instructor Jeremy Bearder

Army veteran Bearder spends his days beasting punters in the park with classes for British Military Fitness (britmilfit.com).



### CarrotFit £2.50 (iOS)

Seven-minute bodyweight workouts, with the added bonus of a sadistic virtual coach trying to shame you into shape.

'I'm a bit of a technophobe but in just a few seconds I was doing a workout. It did surprise me when the app started verbally abusing me - though it was funny to start with, the insults started to grate.'

4

### The fitness blogger Zanna van Dijk

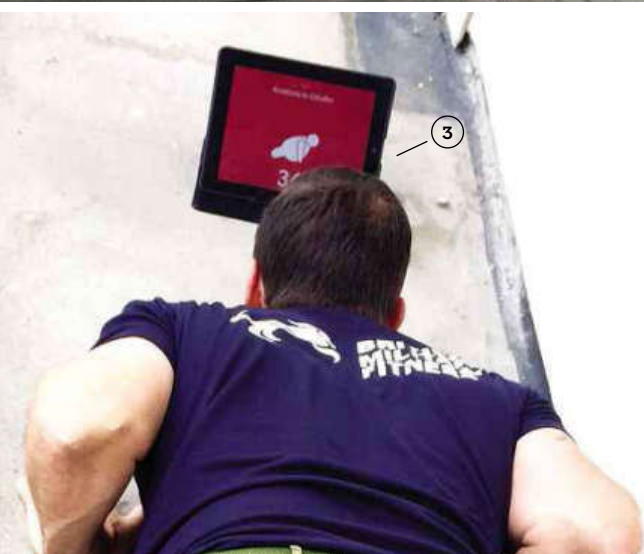
Social media fanatic Van Dijk is a fitness model who offers private training sessions and nutrition advice (zannavandijk.com)

### Nike+ Training Club Free (iOS, Android)

A Facebook-style news feed, picture sharing and friends network promise to motivate you enough to take on the 100+ workouts on offer.



'Workouts are organised by goals and difficulty, and you can see the approximate calorie burn of each one. Picture and video demonstrations are available for every move. It looks as slick as you'd expect from Nike.'



## ENGAGEMENT

'The "touch in" aspect makes you feel more involved in your training progress, but there's little encouragement. The app has plenty of workouts, though, with over 500 exercises, and it even tells you when you're recovered and ready for your next workout.'

'Goals make it easy to stick to a training plan. 8Fit knows that and makes you set a target from the start. Reminder emails keep you on track, making the whole process feel more personal.'

'I didn't feel particularly obliged to stick with CarrotFit because you only get new exercises at certain levels, meaning you have to do the same workout over and over to "earn" more moves. The worst part? It costs to skip levels.'

'The ability to post snaps and build a fitness crew has potential to keep you on track to achieve your goals, but it only really works if you have mates who are using it, or you don't mind sharing with strangers.'

## EFFECTIVENESS

'Bodyweight exercises should be the foundation of any conditioning programme, so you're definitely able to get a good workout. The main flaw is that you need an internet connection for it to work. Also, some exercises require a partner.'

'It modifies workouts based on your feedback, and it wasn't long until I was better at certain exercises. Its meal suggestions look delicious, but they're all American. Sorry, I don't deal with cups.'

'Do the high-intensity workouts regularly and you'll burn fat, build muscle and improve aerobic function. Whether you find the coach encouraging depends on your tolerance for being called, "chubby human", "meatbag" and other barbs.'

'Workouts are anything from seven to 45 minutes long. They're mostly cardio-based, although they claim to target specific body areas. If you're looking for tough strength sessions, you'll be left disappointed.'

## COULD IT REPLACE YOU?

'This app could never replace a real coach because of the lack of vocal instruction in the exercises. Even with my 15 years of experience as a PT, I found myself having to keep looking at the video to ensure I was doing the exercises correctly.'

'It did a decent job, but no. For one thing, it tailors workouts but not enough - it didn't ask about injuries and suggested exercises I can't do with a bad shoulder. Workouts are well put together, but I can't see people sticking with 8Fit as they would a good PT.'

'It's a bit too easy for people who are used to exercising regularly but it's great for people who are starting out and has some good one-liners. It could never replace a decent coach or PT but is perfect for anyone who just needs the motivation to get off the sofa.'

'Its basic four-week programmes are a good introduction to training, and it helps you to stick to a schedule. But you only work as hard as you push yourself - a PT will take your training to the next level.'



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# Winter face savers

Skincare bloggers share their #1 products for the colder months



Prevents premature ageing

Smooths callused hands

Destroys blackheads

Keeps skin hydrated

Eliminates shaving irritation

Oil-free moisture

**JULES HEPTONSTALL**  
[thebeardandthequiff.com](http://thebeardandthequiff.com)



I'm constantly travelling so I need a moisturiser that can combat my ever-changing skin (think tired to greasy to overworked). **Elemis Pro Collagen Marine Cream for Men** is rich without being oily, is quickly absorbed and has high levels of collagen to fend off wrinkles. The bottle also looks damn chic on the sink. **£80 elemis.com**

**THOM WATSON**  
[thefacecollective.uk](http://thefacecollective.uk)



Men's skin is around 25% thicker than women's so it can get pretty dry. Hand cream is a must, but with many honking of flowers or leaving you shiny, **Aveeno** is my saviour. It's neutral-smelling, sinks in like a shot and leaves hands totally hydrated. **£5.25 boots.com**

**CRAIG LANDALE**  
[menswearstyle.co.uk](http://menswearstyle.co.uk)



I use **Kiehl's Ultra Light Daily Defense SPF50** to stop my skin drying out. I have quite oily skin but areas around my nose, forehead and eyebrows become dry and can turn flaky. Not with this, though. It also protects your face from the sun. **£35 kiehls.co.uk**

**CHRIS BEASTALL**  
[apetogentleman.com](http://apetogentleman.com)



**Malin+Goetz SPF 30 Face Moisturizer** is my number one choice. It hydrates the skin, protects it from sun damage and contains antioxidant extracts that defend it against environmental toxins and free radicals. It's just a great all-rounder. **£28 nivenandjoshua.com**

**MICHAEL ADAMS**  
[michael84.co.uk](http://michael84.co.uk)



The one skincare product I couldn't live without is post-shave balm, and my favourite is **Dove MEN+Care Post Shave Balm**. This light, non-greasy cream leaves skin smooth and soft after shaving, and its mild scent gives skin a fresh, clean smell. **£5.50 superdrug.com**

**BART KACZANOWICZ**  
[inhautepursuit.com](http://inhautepursuit.com)



A staple in my grooming arsenal, **GlamGlow YouthMud** is one product I refuse to be without. This face mask transforms skin from dull to dapper in ten minutes. Green tea scented, the French sea clay base is infused with volcanic rock and botanicals to revive and brighten your skin, making you look rested and alert. **£50 glamglowmud.co.uk**



Words Sam Rider **Photography** Steve Neaves  
Stylist Will Barnes **Grooming** Laura Tucker

# A MAN'S GUIDE TO OVERCOMING THE ODDS

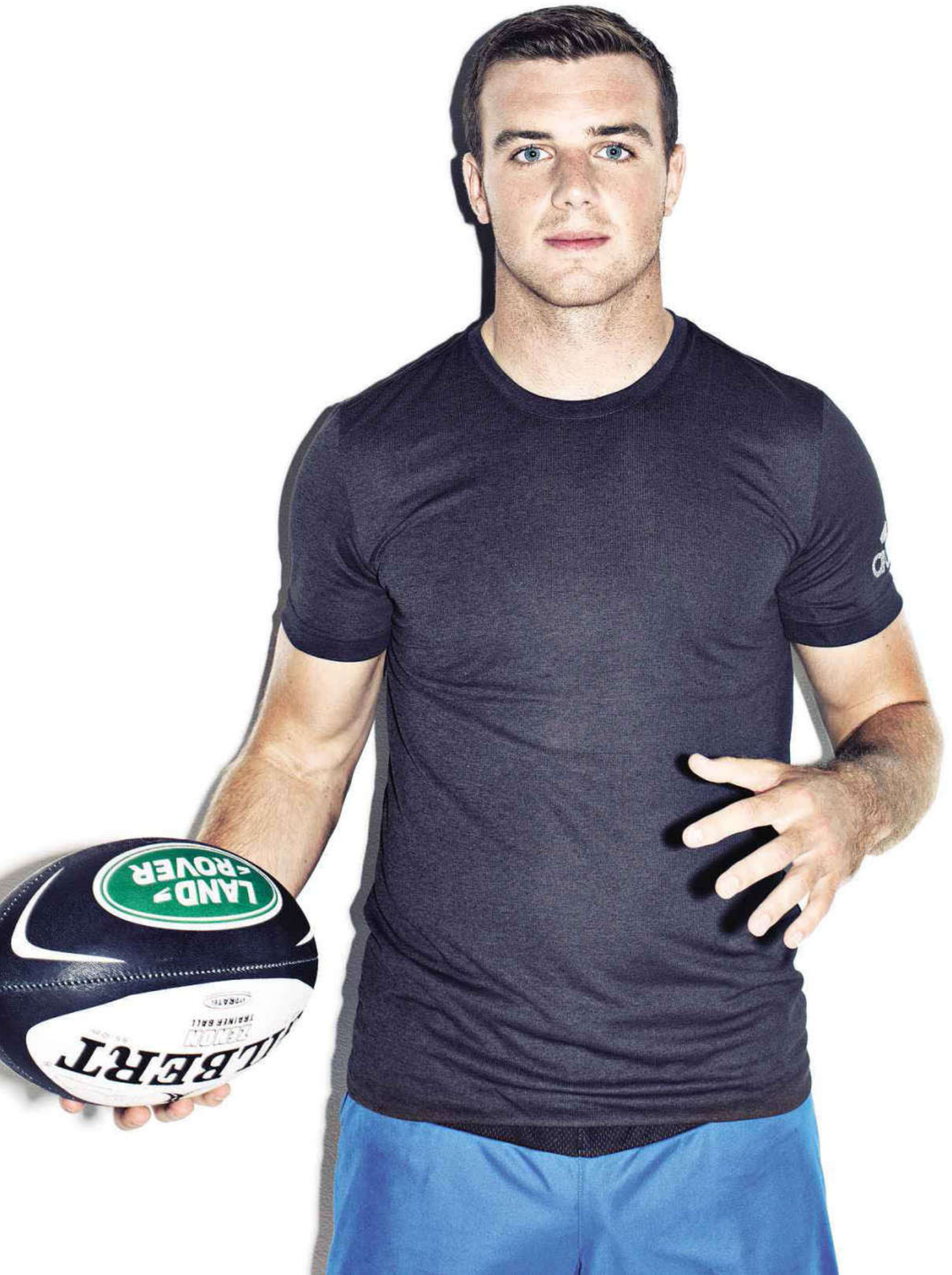
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Written off as too small for international rugby, George Ford has confounded the doubters and emerged as the man to lead England's charge for World Cup glory. *MF* meets the 22-year-old shaping his home nation's destiny



GEORGE FORD

MF FEATURE





# SAMOA CENTRE JOHNNY LEOTA IS 10CM TALLER, 10KG HEAVIER AND ALMOST TEN NECK SIZES CHUNKIER THAN GEORGE FORD.

And last November, in the young fly-half's first England start, Leota was fired at Ford like a homing missile of human flesh. Running full tilt, he clattered at face-height into the young fly-half, sending him sprawling across the Twickenham Stadium turf as 80,000 spectators winced. Ford simply rode the challenge. He clung on to the ball, remained alert, and slipped a pass to his team-mate as another Pacific Island giant lined him up.

The resilience Ford showed that night was characteristic of the way he fronts up to a challenge. At only 1.78m tall and 84kg there were doubts he could cut it at international level, but in that 80-minute spell - and in every game since - he's silenced the critics. He was leading points scorer in this year's Six Nations Championship, where England came a close second to Ireland on points difference, and in less than a year he's made the crucial number ten jersey his own.

The Bath playmaker is thriving in a modern game seemingly built for giants, outwitting them using pace, power and speed of thought to overcome any shortcomings in size. And with it, he's armed England's ferocious forward pack with an adventurous edge and taken up the mantle from Jonny Wilkinson as England's talisman ahead of this year's home World Cup. *MF* met him on the eve of the tournament to discover how he's making winning a habit.

## I WANT IT MORE

Ford's roll call of junior honours is impressive. He started playing for England Under-18s when just 15, later becoming captain, and played a key role in the team's 25-game winning run. At 16 years and 237 days he became the youngest player to appear in a professional match. At 17 he was called up to the Under-20 side that won the Six Nations Grand Slam. Then, despite being the youngest player

competing at the 2011 Under-20 Junior World Cup, he led England to the final where they were edged out by New Zealand. His performances earned him the prestigious IRB Junior Player of the Year. But all this success wasn't handed to him. Never one to wait for good fortune, he had to hunt it down.

Born in Oldham, the son of rugby league legend Mike Ford - now his club head coach at Bath Rugby - he grew up playing school rugby union on Saturdays and amateur rugby league on Sundays. Recognising that the potential for success was greater in the 15-man game, he followed his instincts and joined Leicester Tigers over Bradford Bulls. 'It was a difficult decision,' Ford says when we meet him in the midst of England's summer training camp. 'I was only 15 but ultimately I thought of what can be achieved in rugby union. I thought if I'm going to give it a crack, then I need to be wholly committed from the off.'

Ford faced another tough call early in his Tigers career. As a highly rated understudy he took the calculated risk to leave the then Premiership champions for Bath, who that season had come a lowly seventh. At the end of the 2014-15 season, 51 appearances and 637 points later for Ford, Bath marched to the Premiership final, crushing Leicester - who had scraped into the playoffs - 47-10 in the semis.

Ford's force of personality and will to win have certainly been noticed by his team-mates. 'I have a lot of time for George,' says fellow England player James Haskell. 'He

**'IF YOU WANT  
TO ACHIEVE  
SUCCESS,  
YOU HAVE TO  
GIVE IT  
EVERYTHING  
YOU'VE GOT'**

obviously takes his rugby very seriously. I heard he goes goal kicking on Christmas Day - he's got that kind of mentality. On the field he communicates very well and you know he's incredibly skilful. He controls

the game so well.

In the gym and in training he gets stuck in - he always gives 100% for the team and that's all you can want.'

Ford has also earned the approval of former giants of the game, with 2003 World Cup winner Lawrence Dallaglio endorsing his work ethic. 'He's incredibly







passionate,' says the former England number eight. 'He's clearly a huge talent with a lot of ability but that should be no surprise because he's always practising his skills.'

## 2 SET HIGH STANDARDS

Thorough preparation is certainly a prerequisite in modern rugby union, and the step up to international rugby is steep. Compared with Premiership club rugby, ball-in-play time increases from 37 minutes to 45 minutes in an 80-minute match. Average distance covered grows from 7,500m to 9,000m, and the drop-off in intensity is also significantly different: in club rugby the distance covered by all the players drops 16% in the second half, but in internationals the drop is half that.

The 2015 World Cup is destined to unite the fastest, strongest and fittest group of players the game has ever produced, and each nation has devised sadistic training methods to make theirs the best. England have Matt Parker, former director of marginal gains for British Cycling, as head of athletic performance. 'We've been doing four weights sessions, two speed sessions and two conditioning sessions each week,' says Ford. 'It's probably the hardest couple of weeks I've ever had in pre-season.'

The day before our shoot, the England players were subjected to their most gruelling fitness session yet. On the hottest day of the British summer, the 50-man squad underwent a Yoyo fitness test, akin to the bleep test but demanding even greater acceleration, endurance and recovery.

'You have to sprint about 20m and back before a beep, rest for five seconds, and

repeat as the beeps get closer together,' says Ford, who reveals he came joint second. Four weeks later, after England have scaled the mountains of Denver for oxygen-depleted altitude training to improve the efficiency of their blood in refuelling their muscles, they will have to repeat the test. Anyone failing to improve on their scores is liable to be cut from the team.

'Straight after, without any time to recover, we went into more fitness sessions and game scenarios,' Ford says, still visibly fatigued by the previous day's exertions. 'It was pretty horrific but I understand what the coaches are trying to do. If we can keep our skills high and our minds clear when we're almost dead, we'll be able to stay in the game against the top teams for the full 80 minutes and beyond. Putting the hard graft in as a squad brings us together, and training harder than you have to perform in a match >





George Ford shooting exclusively for MF, west London, July 2015

## RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

*Follow Bath Rugby's ten food commandments to build lean muscle*

### 1 EAT LITTLE AND OFTEN

Aim to eat a meal every two to three hours (five to eight meals a day).

### 2 INCLUDE PROTEINS WITH EACH MEAL

Beef, chicken, pork, fish, eggs and nuts are all good sources.

### 3 EAT VEGETABLES WITH EACH MEAL

Stick to leafy green and vibrant-coloured veg, such as broccoli, spinach and bell peppers.

### 4 STAY WELL HYDRATED

Drink two to three litres of water a day.



means when it comes to the game, you should be able to play harder than you've ever done before and set new standards.'

### 3 EARN RESPECT

When we see Ford up close and personal it's easy to see why Leota struggled to make a dent in the Englishman's rock-solid frame. 'I enjoy the physical part of the game, be it on the pitch or in the gym,' he says, in typically no-nonsense fashion. 'As a fly-half you're the front line of defence and the number one target in attack. You have big guys running at you all the time so you've got to be ready.'

Ford is always brave on the pitch. He takes risks, running up to the line of opposition brutes bearing down on him, before deftly flicking the ball to an arcing team-mate to slice through and score. That confidence with ball in hand stems from a physical confidence in his body - that it will stand up to the challenge.

'George understands that conditioning work in the gym lets him play the game the way he wants to,' says Bath's strength and conditioning coach Allan Ryan [see

## 'WORK HARDER THAN YOUR RIVALS, SET NEW STANDARDS, GO THAT EXTRA MILE'

Ford's full-body workout on p53]. 'He enjoys hard, tough gym sessions. He's always pushing himself to surpass his previous scores, and you can see when he plays that his acceleration and high fitness levels allow him to make those crucial decisions late in the game when others are wilting from fatigue. His mental strength is underpinned by the knowledge that he has prepared as well as he can.'

Of course, Ford has had to work hard to build his robust physique. 'In the past I've had trouble with putting bulk on,'



### 5 CONSUME A VARIETY OF FRUITS AND BERRIES

Darker, thin-skinned fruits such as plums, blueberries and cherries are best because they're high in antioxidants.

### 6 USE HEALTHY FATS

Cook with small amounts of coconut oil or unsalted butter. Use olive oil on salads and veg, and snack on seeds and nuts.

### 7 FOCUS ON WHOLEFOODS

Most of your diet should consist of unprocessed wholefoods (with the exception of protein shakes).

### 8 INCLUDE VARIETY IN YOUR DIET

Get your protein and carbohydrates from numerous sources to ensure maximum nutrient absorption and to avoid food allergies.

### 9 AVOID 'EMPTY' CALORIES

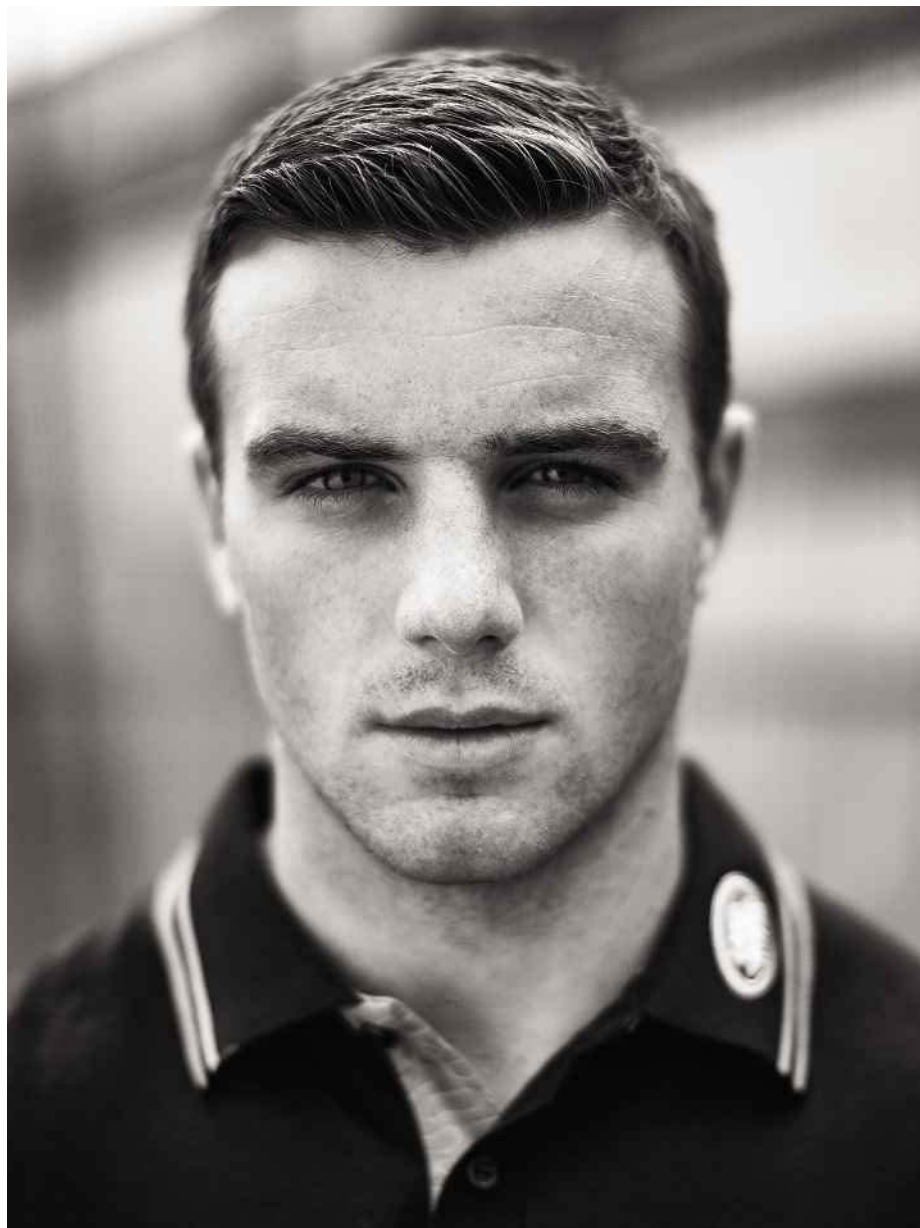
Doughnuts, Coca-Cola and crisps contain plenty of calories but no nutritional goodness.

### 10 STICK TO THE 90/10 RULE

Follow these guidelines for 90% of your meals. The other 10% can be 'cheat meals'. If you eat six meals a day, you can have four cheat meals a week.







Ford says. 'Training harder in the gym, doing weights, can only help so much. Looking after your body, eating the right things, keeping well hydrated and recovering well is just as important.' At Bath special attention is paid to nutrition. Every member of the squad adheres to the club's nutritional ten commandments [see the box on p50] on top of which each player has a tailored supplement menu that supports their training programme.

Ford takes BCAAs and creatine before and during workouts to protect his body from the ravages of training and allow him to push beyond his limits. After training he takes whey protein, a carbohydrate supplement in powder form (at a ratio of 1:2 for protein to carbs) and another dose of creatine to replenish and rebuild his muscles. He's also prescribed 100,000IU of vitamin D for good bone health and to support his immune system. 'Our diet is pretty strict,' says Ford. 'I eat carbs with every meal, whether sweet potato, rice or other sources. And I couldn't live without a rib-eye steak two to three times a week.'

## 'ON THE PITCH, IN THE GYM, IN THE EVERYDAY, YOU HAVE TO EARN RESPECT FIRST'

The modern rugby player pays special attention to recovery too. Whereas formerly training would be followed by late night drinking sessions in the clubhouse, today they use ice baths, cryotherapy chambers and regular sports massage to reverse the damage they inflict on each other on the pitch and on themselves in the weights room. Personal bests are

also regularly recorded, partly to make sure they're not at risk of burning out, but also for valuable ego boosts.


The players track their scores for the bench pull, bench press, bench throw and reactive jump over time, as well as using wellbeing questionnaires and tracking GPS data from matches and training. If the scores are going up, the feedback gives the players renewed confidence; if they're going down, it's a good indication of fatigue and the coaches will reduce their workload. Bath Rugby also use short, max-effort Wattbike sprints to measure peak power output. Players do two six-second sprints aiming to generate as much power as possible. Ford's average is just under 1,900 watts. 'If your score is below 90% of your average it's something to be mindful of when planning max power or speed sessions,' says Allen.

## 4 SEIZE YOUR CHANCE

Ford was in year six at school when Jonny Wilkinson slotted the iconic drop goal that won England the World Cup in 2003. Afterwards Wilkinson was exalted to almost messiah-like national status. But he wore the adoration like a burden, leading to stress, repetitive injury and self-doubts over his ability. This year, before a drop goal has even been lined up, the spotlight on Ford is already fierce.

'It's going to be on an even bigger scale,' says Ford, who already has one successful drop goal in the bank from his 11 caps to date. 'I'm relishing being in that position. World Cups don't come around very often, especially in your own country. You have to enjoy it. You have to want to be part of it. Rather than just play in it I'm going to attack it. This is an opportunity for us to do something really special.'

With those defiant words, Ford leads us out of the studio to a car park on an industrial estate for the final few shots. To underline his commitment to the cause he begins practising his drop kicks and we're quickly joined by a few builders on their lunch break. 'Lads, it's England's playmaker! It's George Ford!' says one of them to his confused colleagues, before catching Ford's kick and rushing to take a selfie with our humble champion.

The blank looks on the other builders' faces reveals that Ford's national status is far from Wilkinson fever-pitch - for now. From the World Cup kick-off on 18th September to the final on 31st October, you can bet he'll do everything in his powers to help England lift the coveted Webb Ellis Cup. And by that time, everyone will know his name. 

**George Ford is a Land Rover ambassador. Land Rover is a worldwide partner of Rugby World Cup 2015 and is recruiting all 96 official mascots for the tournament as part of its 'We Deal In Real' campaign. Follow @LandRoverRugby #WeDealInReal**

# BUILD FULL-BODY POWER

Battle-harden every joint and muscle with Ford's Bath Rugby workout

Bath Rugby strength and conditioning coach Allan Ryan says, 'This workout is designed to improve George's explosive strength, but also helps keep him resilient to injury. We use bands that help build acceleration, anti-rotation and isolation exercises for core strength, lightweight dynamic moves that improve his agility, and skipping to improve ankle stability and lower limb endurance.'

## 1A BACK SQUAT

SETS 3 REPS 4 REST 30SEC

Brace your core and keep your chest up. Push your hips back and bend your knees until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor, then powerfully drive through your heels and push your hips forwards to stand. Ford does these with bands looped around each end of the bar and to the bottom of the squat rack to increase resistance as he drives up.



## 2A BAND LATERAL LUNGE

SETS 4 REPS 8 EACH SIDE REST OSEC

With the same set-up as for the Pallof press, take a big step sideways against the band's resistance and lower into a lunge. Keep your chest up and front knee tracking in line with the direction your foot is pointing. Ford uses a VersaPulley, like a cable machine, to increase the resistance.

## 2B MEDICINE BALL THROW TO JUMP

SETS 4 REPS 3 EACH SIDE REST 90SEC

Hold a medicine ball in both hands. Lower into a half squat, then explode up and forwards as you throw the ball underarm in the same direction. Land on one leg, bending your knee to brace for the impact, focusing on staying stable to work on improving your landing mechanics. Get a partner to throw the ball back to you and repeat.



## 1B HURDLE JUMP SEQUENCE

SETS 3 REPS 1 REST OSEC

Start by standing on a low box. Drop down to the floor and immediately spring forwards on the balls of your feet to hop over five hurdles. Focus on minimal ground contact and fast feet.

## 1C KNEELING PALLOF PRESS

SETS 3 REPS 8 EACH SIDE REST 90SEC

Loop a band to a fixed point and kneel so you're perpendicular to it with your knees apart for balance. Keep your body as upright as possible and your core engaged, and hold the band in both hands at chest height. Press your hands away to increase the rotational force on your core. Ford holds this position for ten seconds, then returns to the start position.



## 3A SKIP

SETS 3 TIME 2MIN REST OSEC

Keep your body upright and your elbows tucked in close to your body, and rotate the rope with your wrists. Bounce on the balls of your feet.



## 3B BARBELL ROLL-OUT

SETS 3 REPS MAX REST 90SEC

Kneel in front of a barbell, holding it with hands just wider than shoulder-width apart. Keep your glutes and core tight as you roll forwards as far as you can, then back to the start. Keep going until you can't do any more reps.



# MUD, SWEAT... AND CHEERS

**Three men,  
two women, 26  
obstacles... and  
17km of mud.  
Sony's Xperia  
technology just  
got its toughest  
test ever**

# T

ough  
Mudder,  
it's stressed  
from the  
start, is  
about  
teamwork.  
Getting  
through  
alone is

impossible - and even training  
for it without support isn't  
much fun. That's why, when  
Sony decided to put its latest  
waterproof, mud-resistant  
smart training tech through  
its paces, it assembled an all-  
star squad of celebrities and  
fitness professionals tasked  
with working together to tackle  
one of the toughest races in  
the Mudder calendar: the  
ultra-hilly Yorkshire edition.





## THE TEAM

The challengers were a mixed bunch: two journalists, one former Royal Navy serviceman and two celebrities – singer Vanessa White and writer and broadcaster Rick Edwards.

The first order of business? Assessing everyone's abilities with a miniature bootcamp consisting of a quick fitness test (burpees, press-ups and sprints) and an early run at some Mudder-style obstacles. And even *that* wasn't easy. 'I got a bit of a shock when I found out how far I'd have to run,' Rick says. 'I have a long-standing knee injury – I had bolts put in it when I was 18 and it still flares up when I run – so my strategy was to start doing some sort of activity every day, alongside yoga and grip work.'

Vanessa came in relatively unscathed but still knew she'd need to put the miles in. 'Running is one of the main reasons I signed up,' she says. 'It's not something I normally do much, and I knew the 17km challenge would push me to work harder in the gym.'

Both celebs – along with the rest of the team – were issued with a Xperia™ Z3, SmartWatch 3 and SmartBand Talk, all from Sony, to track every aspect of their training and recovery, from paces slogged to hours of sleep logged. The challenge was on. ➤







## MEET THE TEAM

**RICK EDWARDS**  
T4 AND  
PARALYMPICS  
PRESENTER  
AND WRITER

Five-a-side lover. Fast  
over short distances.

**STRENGTHS** Tallness  
**WEAKNESSES**  
Old injuries

**JOEL SNAPE**  
MF ASSOCIATE  
EDITOR

Gorilla-level  
pull-up strength but  
mercurial during  
endurance events.

**STRENGTHS** Monkey  
bars, anything  
rope-related  
**WEAKNESSES**  
Long-distance  
cardio, electricity

**AMANDA KHOUV**  
FITNESS EDITOR AT  
WOMEN'S FITNESS

Qualified trainer and  
fan of Muay Thai and  
quality burgers. Road  
work: not so much.

**STRENGTHS** Power,  
aggression  
**WEAKNESSES**  
Running

**VANESSA WHITE**  
SATURDAYS SINGER-  
SONGWRITER

Once tore a ligament  
mid-performance and  
finished the show  
from a wheelchair.

**STRENGTHS**  
Cardio, dancer-level  
balance and agility  
**WEAKNESSES**  
Dislike of mud

**CHRIS BRISLEY**  
EX-SERVICEMAN  
AND FOUNDER OF  
TAKE A CHALLENGE

Has tackled everything  
from 24-hour races  
to an Ironman.

**STRENGTHS** Ultra-  
endurance, tenacity  
**WEAKNESSES**  
Dodgy shoulder

## THE TECH

How Sony's SmartWear pushed  
Team Sony to the limit



### SONY SMARTWATCH 3

Built-in GPS and a music app mean you  
can leave the phone at home for off-the-  
cuff runs, while with speech interaction  
and the Hangouts app you can even  
keep track of your texts on the road.



### SONY XPERIA Z3+

Dust-tight and waterproof to 1.5m\* -  
like all the team's tech - the Xperia Z3+  
is also ultra-light and comes with a  
20.7-megapixel SteadyShot camera  
for enhanced action shots.



### SONY SMARTBAND TALK

The ultra-light option. Log steps travelled,  
calories burned and hours slept - along with  
a host of other metrics - then sync this up  
with your Xperia Z3+ to track and analyse  
your training.

# SONY

\*Waterproof to a depth of 1.5m for 30 minutes. No sea water or salt-water pools. Abuse  
and improper use will invalidate warranty. See [www.sonymobile.com/durability](http://www.sonymobile.com/durability)





## THE TRAINING

**W**hatever your training level going in, a Tough Mudder is no joke. Tunnels, hills, monkey bars and ice-cold water – bookended, of course, with endless, all-consuming mud – mean every body part is tested, and weaknesses are (sometimes mercilessly) exposed. The solution? Make sure you include a bit of everything.

'I started slotting parkour moves and pull-up variations into my regular training runs to work,' says Joel. 'It doesn't have to be complicated – a few precision jumps on a kerb, some monkey-hangs off a tree and you're getting the extra core and power work you need.'

Technology, of course, helps. 'When I'm tracking my performance, it's much easier to tell myself to do one more rep or one more kilometre because the results are there to see,' says Vanessa. 'I think I'm becoming a stats junkie!'

Meanwhile, things took a darker turn for Rick. 'I'd barely started running when I had to stop for fear of my knee exploding. I saw a specialist who filmed me running and found that my feet are in contact with the ground for too long and I'm putting too much pressure on the IT band. I've had to completely change the way I run, which is like being told you've been doing sex wrong all this time. Then, before I could relearn the basics of human movement, I got hacked down playing five-a-side football with



my mates and picked up a calf injury that kept me virtually stationary for a week.'

On the plus side, he was sleeping like a baby. 'There's a great function on the Sony SmartBand Talk that allows you to set an alarm within a time frame rather than on a specific minute. The wristband gently vibrates when you're in the lightest phase of sleep, so you wake up easily and don't experience the grogginess you would if you were woken up mid-snore.'

The stage was set. How would the team fare? Turn over to find out. ➤





# BUILD A MUDDER-READY BODY

When it comes to conquering Everest 2.0 or going full-throttle through the Cry Baby tunnel, traditional gym moves don't cut it. Do three rounds of the circuit below, resting a minute between rounds, to kick-start the process - or, if you're feeling brave, add it to your training runs

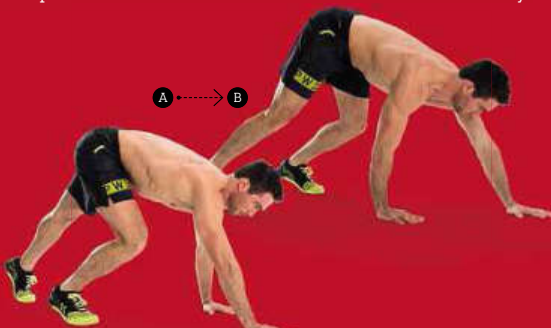
## SPIDER-MAN PRESS-UP REPS 10

Start in press-up position. As you descend, bring one knee, then the other, up to your side. It's the closest thing to crawling.



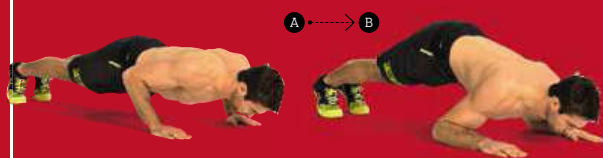
## BEAR CRAWL DISTANCE 10M

Get on your hands and feet with your hips high - the position you'll use to scramble over the Mudder's slippery slopes - and move forward. Controlled but fast is the key.



## RUSSIAN PRESS-UP REPS 10

This press-up variation emphasises core strength and the forearm power needed for tackling obstacles. Drop into a rep as usual, then lean back on your forearms. Rock forward again and press up as normal.



## MONKEY HANG TIME 1MIN

Pull-ups aren't as important as 'brachiation' - being able to dangle your bodyweight from one arm. Hang for ten seconds, then switch arms. Keep going until the time's up.



See the team's training videos at [mensfitness.co.uk/fitness-technology](http://mensfitness.co.uk/fitness-technology)

# THE TRIUMPH



**A**fter eight weeks of running, lifting, eating and sleeping with one eye on the Mudder, five made it to the start line: Vanessa, Amanda, Chris, Joel and running coach George Anderson ([intelligentrunning.com](http://intelligentrunning.com)), who worked with the team on breathing, technique and increasing their pace over long distances. Rick, despite his best efforts, was forced to withdraw with a torn quad, but swiftly adopted the role of head motivator.

The plan was simple enough: start steady, stick together and never leave anyone behind. And it worked - right up until the first real test, the Sony-owned obstacle Arctic Enema 2.0. You're strongly advised to keep your mouth closed as you hit the skipful of water that makes up the course's wettest, coldest obstacle, but - as it turns out - that isn't easy when you're suddenly doused in freezing water.

Vanessa got a mouthful and for a second it looked as if her Mudder might be over, but she soldiered on. After that, everything got easier. The team tackled the Pyramid Scheme and Liberator with polished human-pyramid skills, scrambled through the gas-filled carnage of Cry Baby with barely a tear and managed a flawless triple-header on the punishing new King Of The Swingers, ringing their bells while everyone else plummeted into the drink. The team finished in just under four hours, muddy and mildly electrified... but unbeaten.

'At the finish line I felt a massive sense of achievement, which was



reinforced when I checked my SmartBand Talk and found via the step counter that I'd managed a colossal 28,000 steps in four hours,' says Vanessa. 'I don't think I ever need to get that muddy again, but after completing my first Tough Mudder - and getting in the best shape of my life - I'm definitely ready to keep training and take on my next fitness challenge.'

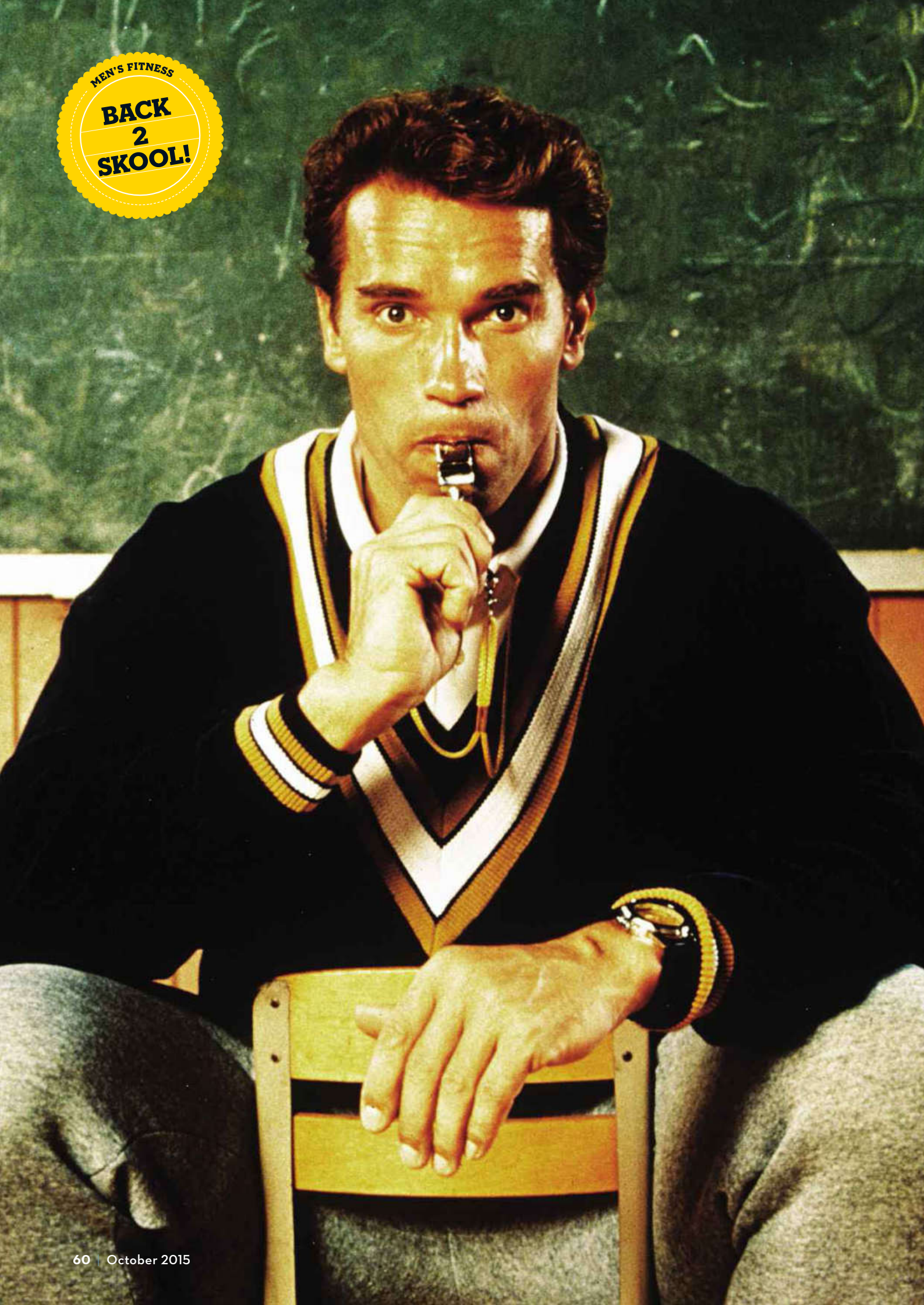
And Rick isn't quite ready to admit defeat either. 'Watching from the sidelines, it looked really fun,' he says. 'It's so collaborative, with people smiling, laughing, helping each other - these are my kind of people. I'm looking forwards to shaking off this injury and giving it a go. I've already convinced my mates to sign up for another edition and I'm genuinely looking forward to it.' Brave words.





For more information about  
the Sony Xperia z3+ visit  
[carphonewarehouse.com/z3plus](http://carphonewarehouse.com/z3plus)





**Words** Joel Snape  
**Illustrations** Alix Watson

# THE **MF** GENERAL STUDIES FITNESS EXAM

Is your fitness knowledge rusty? Are you up to date on the latest health research? Sit the *MF* exam and find out. Put your phone away, and no talking at the back ➤



SUBJECT

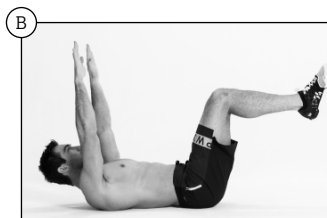
# PHYSICS

The subject that governs every single move you make in training. How much do you know about it?

**Q1** This question tests your knowledge of the six-pack or abdominal muscles. Which of these moves works your rectus abdominis hardest?



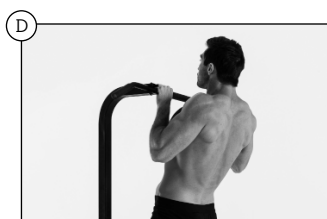
**Plank**



**Crunch**



**Abs wheel roll-out**

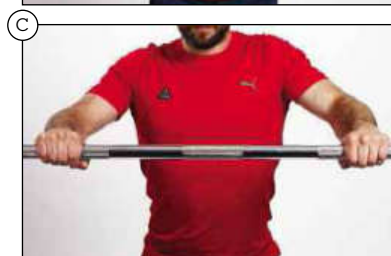
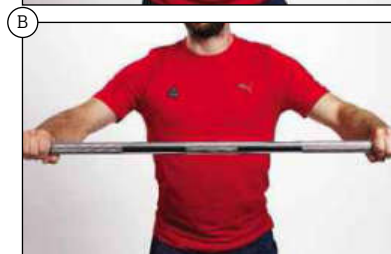


**Pull-up**

## Answer

**D** Surprised? It's true - in experiments to measure electrical activation in the muscles, the humble pull-up outperforms most traditional abs exercises, working the muscles of your six-pack almost ten times harder than the plank.

**Q2** Figures A, B and C show Joel bench pressing. Which grip will let him lift the most weight?



## Answer

**C** A narrow grip works your triceps harder, but going wide won't help pec recruitment - and it increases your chances of injuring yourself. Calculate the ideal grip width by measuring the distance between your acromial processes - basically, the sticking-out bits on your collar-bone - and multiplying it by 1.5. Keep your thumbs that distance apart on the bar when you press for optimal strength and safety.

SUBJECT

# MUSIC

Numerous studies have shown that music has an effect on athletic performance. These questions will help ensure you're on the right track.

**Q3** Ben, Sam and Joel are running while listening to music. Assuming they are all equally fit, who will run the fastest?

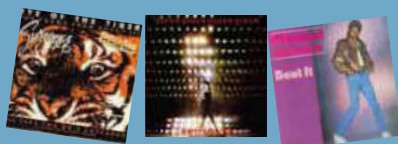
(A) Ben listens to Survivor - 'Eye Of The Tiger' (109bpm) ☐

(B) Joel listens to Queen - 'Don't Stop Me Now' (154bpm) ☐

(C) Sam listens to Michael Jackson - 'Beat It' (139bpm) ☐

## Answer

**C** According to research from Brunel University, music that slightly exceeds your target heart rate - which should be between 120 and 140bpm - has the greatest effect on workout intensity, subconsciously urging you to push yourself harder.



**Q4** What genre of music will have the biggest effect on your lifting performance?

(A) Metal ☐

(B) Rap ☐

(C) Rock ☐

(D) Whatever you like ☐

## Answer

**D** Busta Rhymes or The Beach Boys? Take your pick - a study in the *Journal Of Strength And Conditioning Research* found that 'self-selected' music improved explosive power and mental state during workouts, so the main thing is to choose songs you like.



SUBJECT

# MATHS

Effective training isn't just a matter of going into the gym and doing reps until you're tired or lose interest. The numbers are vital, so make sure you're getting them right.

**Q5** Max is training to increase his lean mass and endurance. How many repetitions should Max do in every set to maximise muscle growth?

- (A) 3-5 ☐
- (B) 6-10 ☐
- (C) 11+ ☐

## Answer

**B** Yes, studies agree that 6-10 is the magic number, but there's a caveat - time under tension is the most important number, so taking 40 seconds to do your curls beats cranking them out in 10 seconds. 'A four-up, two-down tempo works for most moves,' says MF cover model Kirk Miller. 'Take two seconds to raise the weight and four to lower it.'

**Q6** If Max wants to increase endurance, which of these work-to-rest ratios is the most effective?

- (A) 4 minutes of sprinting, 1 minute's rest ☐
- (B) 4 minutes of sprinting, 2 minutes' rest ☐
- (C) 4 minutes of sprinting, 4 minutes' rest ☐

## Answer

**B** According to a 2014 study from the *Journal Of Strength And Conditioning Research*, 2:1 is the magic ratio when it comes to endurance training. Taking less rest between periods of effort reduced intensity, but adding more didn't improve the effect- so for a time-efficient lunch hour session, keep your rests (relatively) short.



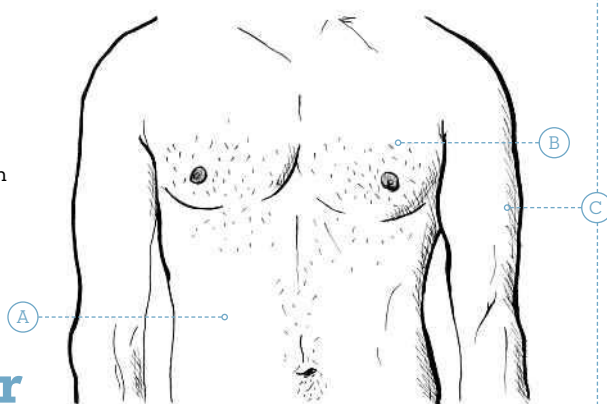
SUBJECT

# BIOLOGY

The effect of hormones on the body has significant impact on your fitness. How much do you know about this? Find out with the questions in this section.

**Q7**

This diagram shows a typical man's torso. Which hormone controls fat in each of the areas indicated?



## Answer

**A** Stress hormone cortisol can lead to unwanted belly-fat storage. Beat it with a couple of episodes of *Bojack Horseman* - according to researchers at Loma Linda University, just anticipating laughter can be enough to lower your levels.

**B** The build-up of oestrogen is the culprit when it comes to gynecomastia - or, as it's almost universally known, man-boobs. Beat it with broccoli: cruciferous vegetables contain a phytonutrient known as DIM that helps metabolise the female sex hormone away.

**C** Low testosterone is often to blame for bingo wings. Bring back the gun show with steak - red meat contains HDL cholesterol, which elevates your T-levels.

**Q8**

Sleep is important for recovery, mental efficiency and weight maintenance. How much should you be aiming to get every night?

- (A) 6 hours ☐
- (B) 7 hours ☐
- (C) 8 hours ☐
- (D) 9 hours ☐

## Answer

**C** America's National Sleep Foundation recommends seven to nine, but if you're a regular gym-goer, more is (slightly) better - according to at least one study, extra hours in the sack reduce your risk of injury from physical activities. But there is a cut-off: another study from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that people who slept for more than nine hours a night were 21% more likely to become obese over the following six years.

# HISTORY

Ever wondered how the move you're doing was invented? Knowing when and why could help you get more out of it, so give yourself a history test.

**Q9** Who invented the Burpee?

- (A) Jack LaLanne ☐
- (B) Theodore Roosevelt ☐
- (C) Hacksaw Jim Duggan ☐
- (D) R Huddleston Burpee ☐

## Answer

**D** Yes, really. Physiologist Royal Huddleston Burpee devised the easy version (no press-up or jump) in 1939 as part of a heart-rate test. He suggested no more than four reps at once for untrained people. You can probably do more.

**Q10** This movement was named after its inventor. What is it called?



- (A) The Reeves Deadlift ☐
- (B) The Schwarzenegger Pull ☐
- (C) The Ferrigno Back-Blaster ☐

## Answer

**A** The Reeves deadlift, invented by former Mr Universe (and 1950s onscreen Hercules) Steve Reeves, targets your spinal erectors, lower back and grip - but also adds range to the classic deadlift, increasing its testosterone hit. To do it, put a pair of 20s on the end of a barbell and grip them between your thumbs and forefingers. Squeeze, lift and feel the forearm burn.

**Q11** Where were kettlebells first used?

- |                                     |                                      |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (A) Greece <input type="checkbox"/> | (C) England <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (B) Russia <input type="checkbox"/> | (D) India <input type="checkbox"/>   |

## Answer

**A** Russia's where they were popularised in modern times - *girya*, the Russian word for kettlebell, was first recorded in 1704 - but they originated in Ancient Greece. There's one in the Archaeological Museum of Olympia in Athens.

# LANGUAGE STUDIES

Getting fit is about more than physical effort - verbal and mental powers have a big part to play, so wrap your tongue around these questions.

## Q12

Matthew is in his local gym, trying for a new personal best. What sort of language should he use to help himself push through pain during his workout?

- (A) Positive self-talk ☐
- (B) Negative self-talk ☐
- (C) Swearing ☐

## Answer

**C** According to research from Keele University, unleashing a volley of bad language has a pain-numbing effect, possibly because it invokes the body's fight-or-flight response. Keep it civil outside of the squat rack, though - the effect is most evident in people who don't normally use bad language.



## Q13

After the gym, Matthew goes to his French lesson. What is the main benefit of learning a foreign language?

- (A) It staves off dementia ☐
- (B) It improves memory ☐
- (C) You multitask better ☐
- (D) All of the above ☐

## Answer

**D** Hai, oui, ja - it's time to pull out the phrasebook, since learning a second language has been linked to all three of these benefits, alongside better spoken English and - incredibly - growing a larger brain. Most of the benefits are only apparent in people who speak a foreign language regularly, but since recent studies suggest that adults can reap the same benefits as children from starting a new language - and achieve similar fluency - there's really no excuse.



**SUBJECT**

# CHEMISTRY

Food is a proven performance-enhancer and what you eat is key to your fitness, so this section tests your awareness of the stuff you put into your body.



Fig A. Dinner

**Q14** Ben's dinner includes foods with different amounts of calories. Place the macronutrients in order of calorie content, starting with the highest.

- (A) Carbohydrate ☐
- (B) Fat ☐
- (C) Protein ☐
- (D) Alcohol ☐

## Answer

**BDAC** Fat is the most calorie-dense food with nine per gram (booze has seven, while protein and carbs have four). Don't rush to give up butter, though - fat also helps you feel fuller and can regulate insulin levels.

**Q15** How can Ben make sure he absorbs as much vitamin A, which promotes immunity and bone growth, as possible from his meal?

- (A) Drink more water ☐
- (B) Eat more fat ☐
- (C) Sleep more ☐

## Answer

**B** Vitamin A is fat-soluble, as are D, E and K. Carotenoids - natural pigments in foods thought to have antioxidant effects - are also more easily absorbed with fat. Eat colourful veg with olive oil to top these up.

**Q16** Which of this meal's vegetables is highest in protein per gram?

- (A) Sweetcorn ☐
- (B) Potato ☐
- (C) Peas ☐

## Answer

**C** Peas boast about 6g of protein per 100g, as opposed to around 3g per 100g for sweetcorn and potatoes. They're also high in iron - add them to omelettes for an easy way to feel full.

**SUBJECT**

# GEOGRAPHY

Variations in living conditions around the world can lead to large differences in the well-being of different countries.

**Q17** While on holiday, you end up having a drink with four guys of different nationalities. With all other things being equal, who will live the longest?

- (A) Japanese man ☐
- (B) Swiss man ☐
- (C) German ☐
- (D) Frenchman ☐

## Answer

**A** Japan has the highest life expectancy, according to the *Lancet*, while the UK ranks 23rd worldwide (the US is 32nd). Portion sizes are part of the solution. 'Serve food on plates 10-15cm in diameter,' suggests author Naomi Moriyama. 'You'll self-regulate better.'

**Q18**

Which of them is likely to be the happiest?



## Answer

**C** Switzerland recently topped the annual World Happiness Index, with Iceland and Denmark not far behind. Work is a factor: the Swiss average 35.2 hours a week at their desks, compared with the UK's 43.6. Start your own cutback with meetings. 'Don't schedule them every week,' says zenhabits.com's Leo Babuta. 'Use them to delegate tasks or flag problems, not for general chat.'

## HOW DID YOU DO?



**0-5**

### MUST TRY HARDER

Time to do some homework. Even a bit of knowledge will help you shred fat with minimal effort. Brush up with the reading list on the right, and start the gains with your brain.



**6-11**

### MAKING PROGRESS

Good work: by training smarter, not just harder, you'll get better results in less time. Commit to learning more about nutrition or fitness, and visit habitforge.com to keep the habit going.



**12+**

### TOP OF THE CLASS

Impressive stuff: you've got this brains/brawn thing down. Keep abreast of the latest developments by reading the magazine and an A\* body won't be far away.



# THE **MF** FITTER MAN READING LIST

The seven books every man should read for self-improvement and motivation. Get them in for the new term

**For...** ultra-endurance inspiration

### IRON WAR

Matt Fitzgerald

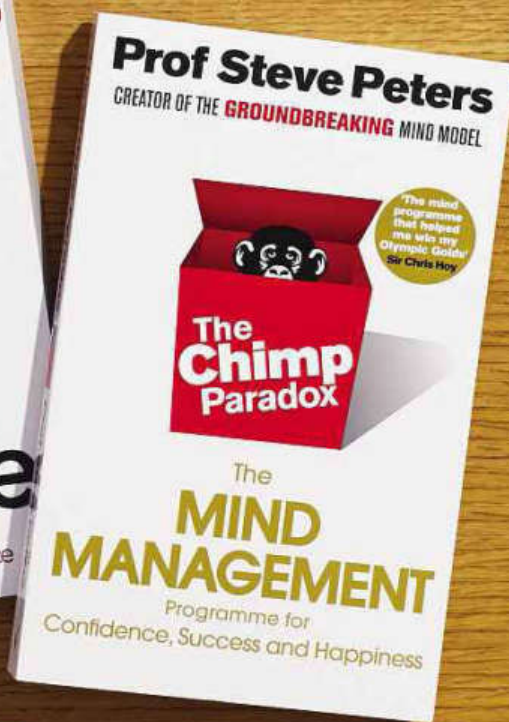
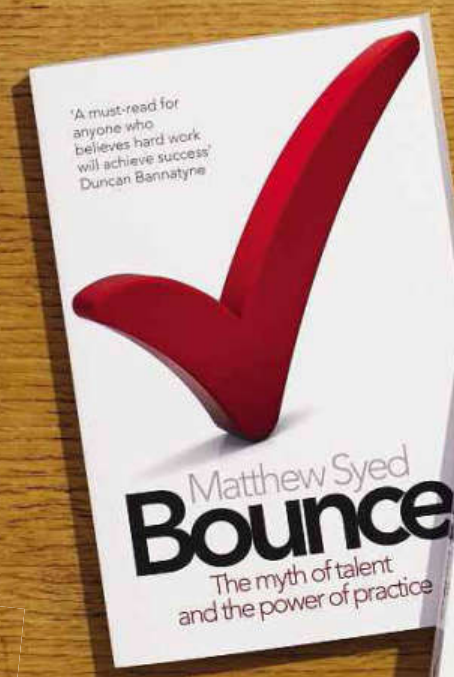
The 1989 Ironman triathlon clash between Mark Allen and Dave Scott was arguably the greatest race in the history of endurance sports. This account blends history and hagiography with modern training science's take on the battering both men put themselves through - it's informative, page-turning stuff (especially if you don't know who won).

**For...** the Terminator's life lessons

### ARNOLD: THE EDUCATION OF A BODYBUILDER

Arnold Schwarzenegger

How did a former Mr Olympia become the Terminator - and then the governor of California? Short answer: because hard work transfers pretty well to any discipline. Ah-noldt's first autobiography breaks down his early training in easy-to-follow detail, but it's his focus in the face of adversity that really inspires.





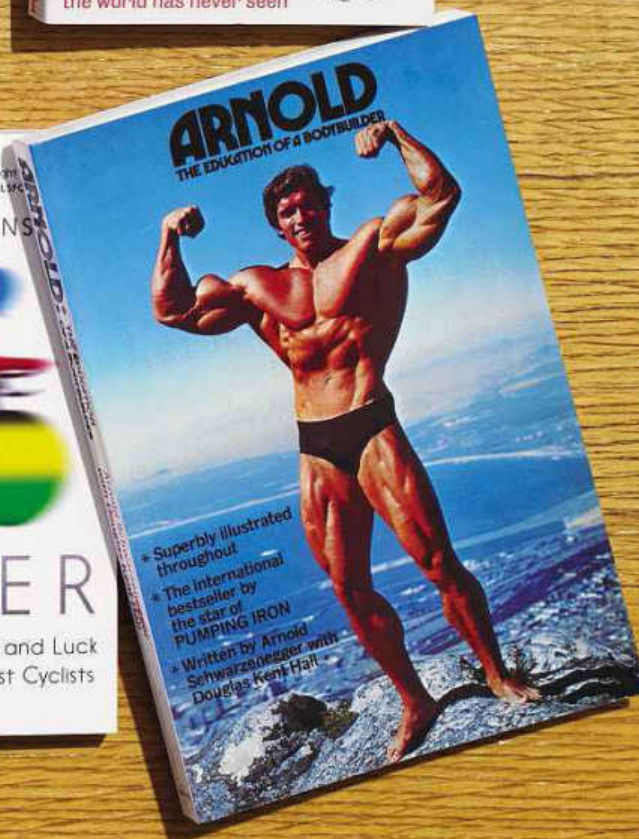
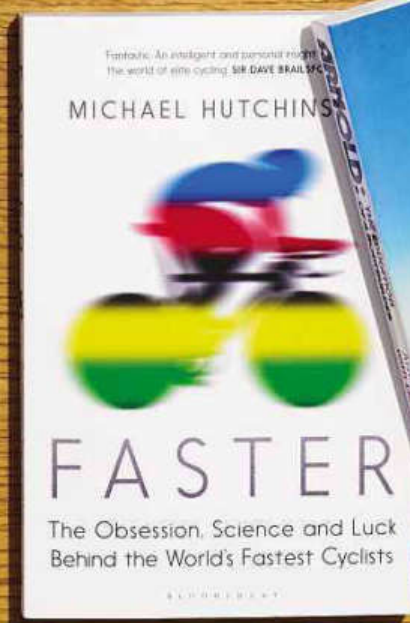
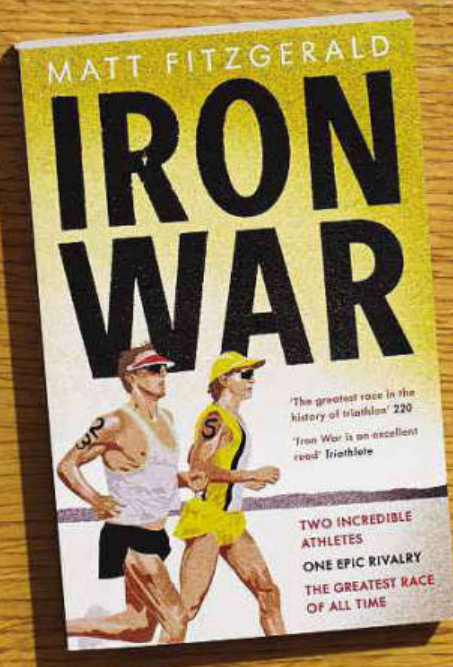
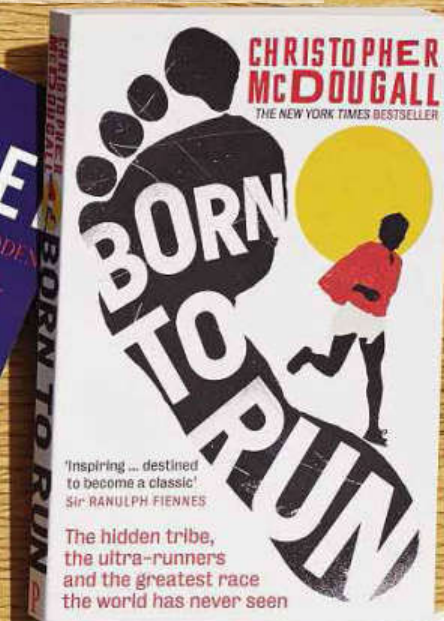
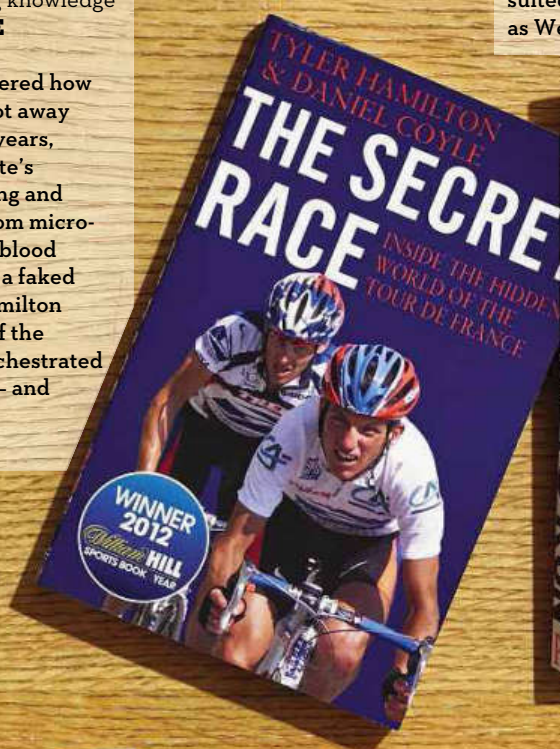
**For... running know-how**  
**BORN TO RUN**  
*Christopher MacDougall*  
The barefoot evangelism is suspect, but it's basically impossible to read MacDougall's account of a secret ultramarathon through Mexico's Copper Canyon without lacing up your Inov-8s and going for a jog. You'll also learn why pigs are such bad runners (no nuchal ligament) and how persistence hunting works (with massive difficulty).

**For... insider doping knowledge**  
**THE SECRET RACE**  
*Tyler Hamilton*  
If you've ever wondered how Lance Armstrong got away with it for all those years, his former team-mate's tell-all is enlightening and infuriating stuff. From micro-dosing with EPO to blood transfusions during a faked bus breakdown, Hamilton reveals the extent of the Tour's most well-orchestrated doping programme - and the megalomania of the man in charge.

**For... mastering marginal gains**  
**FASTER**  
*Michael Hutchinson*  
Time-trial specialist Hutchinson has spent most of his adult life trying to go faster on two wheels - and this book breaks down how he did it. Whether he's exploring the lactate system or laminar airflow, his quest for marginal gains shows just how far it's possible to go in pursuit of perfection - whether you're a cyclist or not.

**For... a world-class mental edge**  
**THE CHIMP PARADOX**  
*Dr Steve Peters*  
What do snooker champ Ronnie O'Sullivan, cycling icon Bradley Wiggins and the English rugby team have in common? They've all worked with Dr Steve Peters, whose simplified model of how the brain works - a three-way split between calculating 'computer', rational 'human' and emotional 'chimp' - has helped thousands of athletes handle game-day pressure. Fortunately, it's just as suited to the workplace as Wembley Stadium.

**For... an improved work ethic**  
**BOUNCE**  
*Matthew Syed*  
Hard work pays off: that's the moral of three-time Commonwealth table tennis champion Syed's investigation into genetics, talent and the '10,000 hours of practice' concept. Here's the digested version: getting world-class at anything takes ages - but you can still benefit from applying Syed's lessons in less time. **MF**









# WHO DARES WINS?

A catastrophic series of errors by the MoD led to the deaths of three SAS reservists during training in the Brecon Beacons. But as *MF* investigates the tragedy, it finds bigger questions around the unregulated rise of endurance fitness and events >

Words Matt Huckle  
Photography Tom Miles





MF's Matt takes on part of the route on which three experienced reservists died in 2013

Left to right: former Royal Artillery soldier Luke Wardrop, Matt, ex-special forces Jason Birch

**T**

he windswept summit of Twyn Mwyalchod, known in military circles as 642, is as beautiful as it is bleak. *MF* is standing at the top of this stunning

part of south Wales 642m above sea level (hence the name) where almost exactly two years ago in 27°C heat Lance-Corporal Edward Maher, probably disoriented from severe heat exhaustion, set off in the wrong direction in search of his next checkpoint.

By the time help finally arrived Maher was dead, still clutching a water bottle and a half-eaten chocolate bar. Rigor mortis had already set in.

Maher, 31, was one of three reservists who died after training in the Brecon Beacons on 13th July 2013, all of them experienced soldiers. The others, Lance-Corporal Craig Roberts, 24, and Corporal James Dunsby, 31, also perished from hyperthermia brought on by the extreme heat. During this summer's inquest the coroner said they were left in the hills for hours after they'd collapsed.

The three soldiers might have been SAS reservists but they weren't lacking in fitness. Both Maher and Dunsby had served tours in Afghanistan, making them no strangers

to high temperatures. 'The part-time guys may have jobs but they come and train in the hills off their own bat,' says former special forces soldier Jason Birch, founder of The Special Forces Experience (TSFE), a company that allows civilians to experience some of the challenges elite military personnel face. 'In fact the full-time soldiers often find it harder to make time to train because their schedules are more tightly dictated by their military commitments.'

Birch is our guide for the day, taking *MF* along the last route the three men ever took. 'The temperature reported was 27°C but anyone who frequents these kind of hills knows that doesn't tell the whole story,' explains Birch. 'The actual ground temperature can go up or come down in an instant. Walk into one of these heat basins and it hits you like a brick in the face.'

## BATTLE FATIGUE

These three ultra-fit men would have been feeling the exhausting effects of the heat long before they collapsed - but it's more complicated

than simply feeling tired. 'Exhaustion is classified as either mental, physical or heat,' says emergency and intensive care doctor Emil Hodzovic ([instagram.com/projectgoliath](https://www.instagram.com/projectgoliath)). 'You can train to push through mental exhaustion, which is really just your brain telling you that you're approaching your limits.'

Pushing through this is a vital part of the mental toughness required to pass SAS selection, and with endurance races and extreme challenges on a seemingly unstoppable rise it's something an increasing number of men aspire to. The culture of pushing through barriers, ignoring exhaustion and possible warning signs is drilled into us as what it takes to win.

Right now, for *MF* and photographer Tom, the going is relatively easy. Our calves are aching but we're a long way from any such extremes.

As we press on through the tricky, boggy terrain, Birch gives us an insight into the Army culture of breaking through barriers, explaining how he hid a fractured wrist from command when he was on

**'NOT  
FINISHING  
THE ROUTE  
FOR ANY  
REASON IS  
A FAILURE'**





James Dunsby, Craig Roberts and Edward Maher died from hyperthermia

Photography Rex

selection. 'It was a nightmare trying to carry the 9lb [4kg] rifle but I didn't want to be pulled,' he says, referring to the pressure of failing to pass selection. 'The guys may not even have known they were in trouble. Heat exhaustion creeps up on you, and they'd be telling themselves they're just really tired and there's only a short way to go.'

## FAIL SAFE

There's a clear incentive for soldiers to mask injuries and exhaustion during selection - not finishing the route for any reason is a failure, even if it's not the soldier's fault. 'The point-to-point they tragically died on is one of the pinnacle events of selection - it's one of the last marches you do. They've done six months of work before this stage.' So why didn't they quit or call for help? 'They've paid the ultimate price for that. It's not the first time it's happened and I guarantee it won't be the last either,' says Birch.

The official report didn't blame the men's reluctance to quit as the cause of death, or conclude that they weren't

acclimatised to heat. It laid the blame squarely at the door of the Ministry of Defence, citing a string of errors from a lack of risk assessment to simple things such as not having the keys to open a gate that would have allowed emergency vehicles to get to the men sooner. (Birch subsequently helped change this to a combination lock, the code given to people who need it.) The report effectively condemned the MoD for

disregarding its own safety guidelines.

'The argument really is with the MoD not spending money on better trackers, better communications and better-trained staff on the ground,' Birch asserts. 'James Dunsby died a few weeks later in hospital. If he'd been found earlier there's a much better chance he'd have survived.'

The tragedy has raised many questions,

in the armed forces but also beyond - particularly at civilians trying their hands at endurance events for the sake of fitness. And bragging rights.

Tough Mudder has had over two million competitors since it began in 2010. Spartan Race now has the Ultra Beast and Mudderthon events, each 42km long, and there are a host of open entrance fitness competitions such as The Athlete Games that which pack several tough workouts into a weekend. The team behind the Royal Parks half marathon, generally seen as an entry-level race, has now launched a 50km ultramarathon. The boundaries are being pushed all the time, but how far is too far?

'Most people haven't got the mental strength to push hard enough to kill themselves,' says Hodzovic. 'But that doesn't mean you can't seriously hurt yourself. If you take on a challenge that's tougher than you're used to, you put yourself at greater risk of rhabdomyolysis, a condition where your muscles start to break down and put strain on your kidneys.' Extreme cases of 'rhabdo' can kill, and even mild ones can leave you on a dialysis machine.

## IMITATION GAME

Deeper into the hills, with the wind picking up and rain threatening, we start to

## WARNING SIGNS

*What to look for to prevent someone suffering*

**'If someone suddenly stops what they're doing and they look confused, clammy, pale and unwell, step in,' says Hodzovic. 'Try to cool them down and get them to drink water. If the symptoms don't go away in half an hour, consider stopping.'**

**'If they still feel sick, faint or too hot, or their pulse is racing, it doesn't mean they're going to die of rhabdo. But they are too dehydrated to continue that session.'**



# HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Whether you're SAS-ready or just pushing your PBs, Dr Emil Hodzovic outlines the early warning signs with different aspects of exhaustion

## HEAT EXHAUSTION

**SYMPTOMS** 'Early symptoms are heavy sweating, hot, red skin and light-headedness,' says Hodzovic. If your urine is dark yellow, you've got cramps and you stop sweating, then you're in serious trouble.

**AVOID IT** 'The main way is session planning,' says Hodzovic. Check the weather before you train. Don't aim to do an intense fitness session at 1pm if the temperature is high.

## DEHYDRATION

**SYMPTOMS** 'You'll find yourself with a dry mouth, a drop in performance, headaches and dizziness,' says Hodzovic. More serious issue are confusion, fits, weakness and cramps. Not sure if you're disoriented? Set yourself a simple maths problem - if you struggle with it, you probably are.

**AVOID IT** 'If you're thirsty, drink. It's as simple as that,' says Hodzovic. 'It's best to drink little and often though.' The right amount varies from person to person but the NHS recommends you drink enough so your urine is clear and you're not thirsty for the next half-hour.

## SLEEP DEPRIVATION

**SYMPTOMS** 'The acute effects of a lack of sleep are mainly poor decision-making, poor memory and slower reaction time,' says Hodzovic. While no-one has been recorded as dying purely from lack of sleep, a study in the *Journal Of Sleep* found that after 24 hours there is a significant drop in cognitive function and alertness.

**AVOID IT** 'If you haven't had enough sleep, self-motivational talk can help,' says Hodzovic. 'And a 20-minute nap will give you a small boost if you need to perform better.'

## RHABDOMYOLYSIS

**SYMPTOMS** 'Rhabdomyolysis is often the result of unaccustomed stress,' says Hodzovic. 'If you do little exercise, then train really, really hard, muscle cell walls break down and release myoglobin, which clogs up the kidneys. There's a spectrum of effects, though, which can be anything from a bit of muscle soreness and slightly dark urine to kidney failure.'

**AVOID IT** 'Not all dehydration leads to rhabdo, but being well hydrated is important,' says Hodzovic. 'Make sure you build up to big challenges, as the more accustomed you are to physical strain, the less likely it is you'll have problems with rhabdo.'



The Brecon Beacons are intended to provide a hard test - but safety measures are crucial



understand just how tough this terrain is. It's a mixture of harsh climbs, deep valleys and marshlands where getting a stable footing is almost impossible. Everything adds up to sap your energy, especially when carrying a 10kg backpack - and the soldiers would have been carrying 30kg.

Before 43-year-old Birch - accompanied today by his colleague, former Royal Artillery NCO Luke Wardrop, 30 - set up TSFE he organised a charity march through these same hills to raise awareness of what happened to Maher, Roberts and Dunsby. The march received an overwhelming response and TSFE was born soon afterwards, offering special forces-style hikes in the Brecon Beacons for people of all ability levels.

Although our trek will leave my legs and feet in pain for several days after, it isn't a patch on what faces the soldiers during SAS selection. We cover our 10km route at an average pace of 2km an hour. The MoD point-to-point route that the men died on was 28km long and the cut-

off time for reservists requires an average speed of 3km an hour. For regular SAS it's 4km an hour. That means soldiers need to sprint on downhills to make up for the slower climbs. Lose your footing on the uneven ground and the weight of your backpack almost guarantees a hard fall.

## FULL FORCE

It's gruelling but there's an undeniable appeal for the average civilian and many want a piece of it, signing up for SAS-style events as well as Tough Mudders. TSFE, for example, runs a three-event challenge called Loadstone, which involves a navigational weekend, as well as two routes the SAS uses on selection - the Fan Dance

and point-to-point. All are done to the exacting standards the UK's special forces demand.

If these routes are treacherous enough to take down elite soldiers, are we exposing ourselves same risks? 'The SAS guys can close down their self-preservation alerts and just smash themselves to pieces,' says Hodzovic.

**'MANY  
CIVILIANS  
SIGN UP  
FOR SAS-  
STYLE  
EVENTS'**





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*Matt was aching after the day's hike. Strangely Birch and Wardrop didn't experience the same pain*

'It's unlikely a person off the street will have those physical reserves and or the mental strength to push themselves to the point of serious harm. However, it's possible to reach a point where you can't keep pushing on - runners know it as "hitting the wall". Seeing a finish line won't give you an extra boost.'

With no governing body and no qualifications required to set up this kind of event, anyone can start a company and dream up ever trickier challenges to throw at people without having to consider potential dangers - and with ticket prices for some nearly £150, it's easy to see the appeal. When you consider that over two million people have competed in Tough Mudders worldwide, it's easy to see how companies with less integrity than Tough Mudder or TSFE would want an easy slice of that action.

Birch stresses that he puts a lot of time and effort into safety on his courses so that

if you find yourself in trouble, you won't be left to fend for yourself. 'There will always be an aspect of danger when you come to the hills,' he admits. 'You can't wrap it up in cotton wool. But you can reduce that risk.'

Rather than having people only at the checkpoints as the MoD does, TSFE has marshals moving between the routes to pick up stragglers or people who are in difficulty. 'We don't feel the need to use trackers because we have enough guys on the ground to monitor the candidates,' says Birch. It means you're not going to be stuck for hours hoping someone checks your status and comes looking for you.

It's not always easy to distinguish someone with heat exhaustion from someone who's just knackered at the end of a 28km march. Staff are trained to look for confusion, so candidates are quizzed at each checkpoint to make sure they're still functional. If that had been done back in 2013 it's

likely Maher, Roberts and Dunsby would still be alive. 'Competitors are asked to point out where they are, where they've come from, how they got here and how they're getting to their next destination,' explains Birch, while demonstrating what's expected using his well-travelled map. 'If they can answer this, they're showing they've got their wits about them.' This also happens in the real SAS selection - but the coroner's report into the deaths found that nothing was flagged at the checkpoints, missing a chance to prevent the tragedy.

## FOR QUEEN AND COUNTRY

'The alarm was raised when the men hadn't arrived at their next checkpoint, but that time frame was far too long,' says Birch as we head to the VW Valley - short for Voluntary Withdrawal. This steep and rocky ravine is one of the last hurdles on the point-to-point, and is where Roberts body was found. The descent down the valley is

bad enough but the climb is gruelling.

Beyond the top of the valley the end of the point-to-point race comes into view and with it the A470 main road. Dunsby collapsed no more than a couple of hundred metres from the road. It's distressing to think how quickly help could have reached him if someone had been alerted earlier.

The MoD says it has learned lessons from the incident, and has changed how it deals with the risk of heat illness as a result. For the rest of us it's a reminder of the preparation required and potential dangers of extreme endurance challenges - and of the terrain in Britain, which is often thought to be harmless. 'There's fit,' says Wardrop as we reach the end of our 10km trek, 'then there's hill fit. And that's a totally different thing.' ■

**For more information about training like the SAS visit [thesfexperience.co.uk](http://thesfexperience.co.uk).**

## MF APPROVED

*The Special Forces Experience is as close as many of us will get to being in the SAS - safely. Working to the same standards as Army special forces, you can do TSFE's events individually or tackle them together as part of the Loadstone series*

### SF10 WEEKEND

The weekend starts with full instruction on how to navigate hills and be safe in the Brecon Beacons. The second day features a 16km route that mimics one of the initial selection tests for soldiers. Loadstone will give you a cut-off time and a 16kg pack.

### THE FAN DANCE

This 24km march is infamous within the ranks of special forces soldiers. It's the first major hurdle to selection and features a climb of Pen y Fan, the highest point in the Beacons at 886m. Again there's a cut-off time, but for this the pack is 20.4kg.

### POINT-TO-POINT

This 28km navigational point-to-point exercise starts and finishes at Beacons Reservoir. Checkpoints for the event are provided for entrants on the day. As in the Fan Dance, there's a cut-off and you get a 20.4kg pack to carry.





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**CROSSFIT**

# BATTLE READY

CrossFitter Alistair McGovern never felt like he was reaching his true training potential - until he enlisted the help of Optimum Nutrition and coach Andy Edwards. Four months later he's in the shape of his life, and ready for a second crack at the Battle Of The Beasts competition

Follow the  
Upgraders at  
[mensfitness.co.uk/  
upgradeyourfitness](http://mensfitness.co.uk/upgradeyourfitness)

## THE UPGRADER Alistair McGovern

CrossFit competitions are among the toughest tests of conditioning and mental strength the fitness world has to offer, but all the grit and graft you can possibly muster won't be enough if you're missing one key element: technique. This was the case for ardent CrossFitter Alistair McGovern, whose strength gains had stalled in several key lifts after years of training - and that was one reason he failed to qualify for the Battle Of The Beasts CrossFit competition last year.

It was something his coach Andy Edwards set about fixing as soon as he began his Upgrade, and the results have been game-changing. 'For the first few months the main focus was on improving my lifting technique,' says Alistair. 'Slowing things down made a huge difference, as did practising individual movements within key lifts like the snatch and clean.'

When he first started my Upgrade, Alistair's three-rep max in the back squat was 145kg. 'When I re-tested it last week, I managed 172.5kg for three, which is a dramatic jump,' he says. 'I

feel stronger, fitter and faster than ever, and I'm still noticing body composition improvements. Actually I've had to buy a second batch of new T-shirts to accommodate more shoulder growth and I'm still getting leaner around my midsection.'

With this year's Battle Of The Beasts on the horizon, Alistair is confident his revamped training will see him significantly improve on last year's performance. 'The first round of qualifying involves submitting a video of yourself performing a six-minute AMRAP - as many rounds as possible - of nine power cleans, six front squats and three overhead presses,' he explains. 'I did my first dummy run last week and it went really well, so I'm feeling very positive about my chances.'

And coach Edwards is happy to concur. 'With the weights Alistair can now lift thanks to his improved technique, he should have a great chance of qualifying and being competitive at the comp.' Beast mode: on.

● Follow the progress of all the Optimum Nutrition Upgraders at [mensfitness.co.uk/upgradeyourfitness](http://mensfitness.co.uk/upgradeyourfitness)



## WINNING MOVES

Alistair's workouts currently consist of technique-based strength and gymnastic work followed by CrossFit-style conditioning circuits. Here's an example

### 1 Jump squat

SETS 9 REPS 2 REST AS REQUIRED

Holding a barbell across your shoulders, lower into a squat until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor. Then jump up explosively. Bend your knees to cushion your landing and continue into another squat for the next rep.

### 2 Back squat

SETS 6 REPS 2 REST 60SEC

With your feet just wider than shoulder-width apart, rest the barbell on the back of your shoulders. With your chest up and core braced, squat down until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor. Drive back up through your heels to stand.

### 3 Handstand hold

SETS 8 TIME 30SEC REST 30SEC

Place your hands slightly wider than shoulder-width apart on the floor and kick both legs up into the air to rest against the wall. Try to tuck your head in, press into the floor to engage your shoulders and tense your abs to keep your body in line.

### 4A Muscle-up

SETS 8 REPS 5 REST FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE MINUTE

Grab a chin-up bar with an overhand grip, keeping your thumbs on top. Swing your body, then pull up so your shoulders are above your hands, elbows bent. Rotate at the shoulders and lean forward, then straighten your arms.

### 4B Wall ball

SETS 8 REPS 15 REST FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE MINUTE

Stand facing a sturdy wall, holding a medicine ball out in front of your chest. Lower into a deep squat. Push through your heels to stand, throwing the ball at the wall as you come up. Catch the ball as it bounces back (if you can) then continue into the next rep.

### 4C Handstand walk

SETS 8 DISTANCE 15M

REST FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE MINUTE

Place your hands slightly wider than shoulder-width apart on the floor and kick both legs up into the air, pressing into the floor to engage your shoulders. Tense your abs to keep your body in line. Walk forward one hand at a time.

## BEST OF THE REST

Here's how the other three Optimum Nutrition Upgraders are impressing their coaches

### RUGBY



#### NIALL MOODY

Although he suffered another injury scare when he crashed a mountain bike on holiday, Niall had a successful trip to the chiropractor and is training hard again and enjoying pre-season. He's even looking forward to the bleep test - which he used to dread more than anything - and his lifts are still going up too. He recently squatted a new PB of 160kg, with the help of Optimum Nutrition's Gold Standard Pre-Workout supp.

### BEACHBODY



#### BEN MARUM

With Ben's final photoshoot fast approaching, his coach Tim Chase is continuing to ramp up the training intensity by reducing his rest periods and introducing supersets and drop sets into his workouts. He's also doing more cardio training, having added three fasted steady-state cardio sessions to his morning routines and two extra HIIT sessions after his regular lifting workouts, followed by a post-workout shake with added Optimum Nutrition Creatine.

### FITNESS MODELLING



#### MATT BOTWRIGHT

Having cut 9kg in just eight weeks to enter his first WBFF competition, aspiring physique model Matt says he's feeling 'incredible' and is targeting a podium finish at his next event. After one well-deserved post-comp cheat day, he's back on his strict diet and is training harder than ever, with Optimum Nutrition Amino Energy giving him extra support.

## SUPPORTING CAST

Getting competition-ready requires more than just hard training - here's a look at McGovern's performance-enhancing nutrition plan



'Alistair's daily calorie intake varies from 3,800 on a double training day to 3,200 on a rest day,' says Optimum Nutrition nutritionist Crionna Tobin, who designed his nutrition plan. 'On a training day this is

split into 60% carbs, 20% protein and 20% fats, and on a rest day it's 50% carbs, 20% protein and 30% fats. The aim is to support the growth of lean muscle mass while also improving his ability to recover after tough training sessions.

'The plan is full of clean, nutrient-rich foods, with an emphasis on healthy carbs

such as brown rice, sweet potato, wholemeal bread and oats, served with plenty of steak, chicken and Greek yogurt for protein. His healthy fats generally come in the form of nut butters, avocados and extra virgin olive oil, and he has three portions of fresh fruit and veg with his breakfast, lunch and dinner.

'This is supported by his supplement regime, which includes a scoop of Optimum Nutrition Creatine before training to enhance his performance, one or two scoops of Optimum Nutrition BCAAs during training to support his muscle-building efforts and a scoop of Optimum Nutrition Gold Standard 100% Whey Protein after training to help repair his muscles.'



Words  
Joel Snape  
Photography  
Ray Burmiston



*Triple threat:  
blend mobility,  
strength and  
fat loss training  
to be ready  
for anything*



# THREE-WAY IMPROVEMENT

*Strength, mobility and fat loss are the cornerstones of fitness.  
Work out what you need and use your time effectively*

**J**ay-Z might have 99 problems, but most men have a mere three - in health terms, anyway. 'The three most important qualities in training and lifestyle are joint mobility, body composition and strength gaps,' says trainer Dan John (danjohn.net). 'Or, in other words, moving pain-free, keeping lean body mass with more muscle and less fat, and improving your quality of life.'

The trick? Finding out which area you should focus on - and fixing it. John splits his clients into seven venn-diagrammed types, depending on whether they need to work on one, two or all three qualities. We've simplified the process: do the assessment below and then turn the page to see which camp you belong to. By assembling an appropriate regime, you'll use your time efficiently, suffer less in the gym and see results faster.

## YOUR FIVE-MINUTE ASSESSMENT

Do the tests below - all you need is a tape measure and some dumbbells - then consult the key to see where you are on the strength/mobility/fat-loss spectrum. Once you're done, turn the page for your workout

- ☐ **1 //** Stand on one leg for ten seconds. Can you do it without falling over?
- ☐ **2 //** Measure the circumference of your waist. Is it less than half your height?
- ☐ **3 //** Do you need more than one decent pillow to go to sleep?
- ☐ **4 //** Can you hold a press-up position plank (basically, the top of a press-up) for two minutes?
- ☐ **5 //** Sit on the floor, then get up again. Can you do it without using your hands?
- ☐ **6 //** Warm up, then do a standing long jump. Do you cover more distance than your own height?
- ☐ **7 //** Grab a pair of 32kg dumbbells (40kg if you weigh more than 90kg). Can you carry them 30m without stopping?

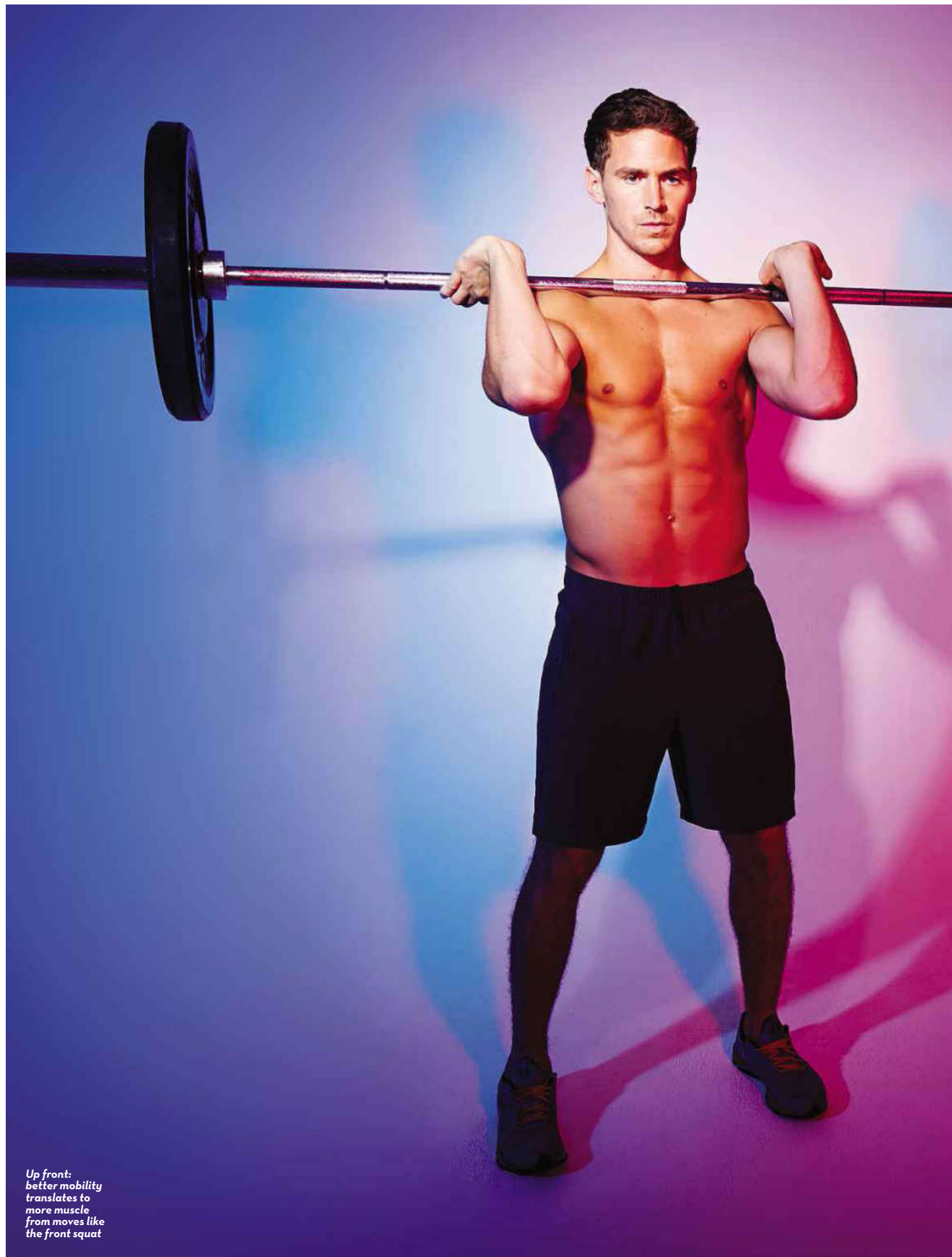
IF YOU SAID  
'NO' TO...

1,3,5 OR 6,  
YOU NEED  
MOBILITY

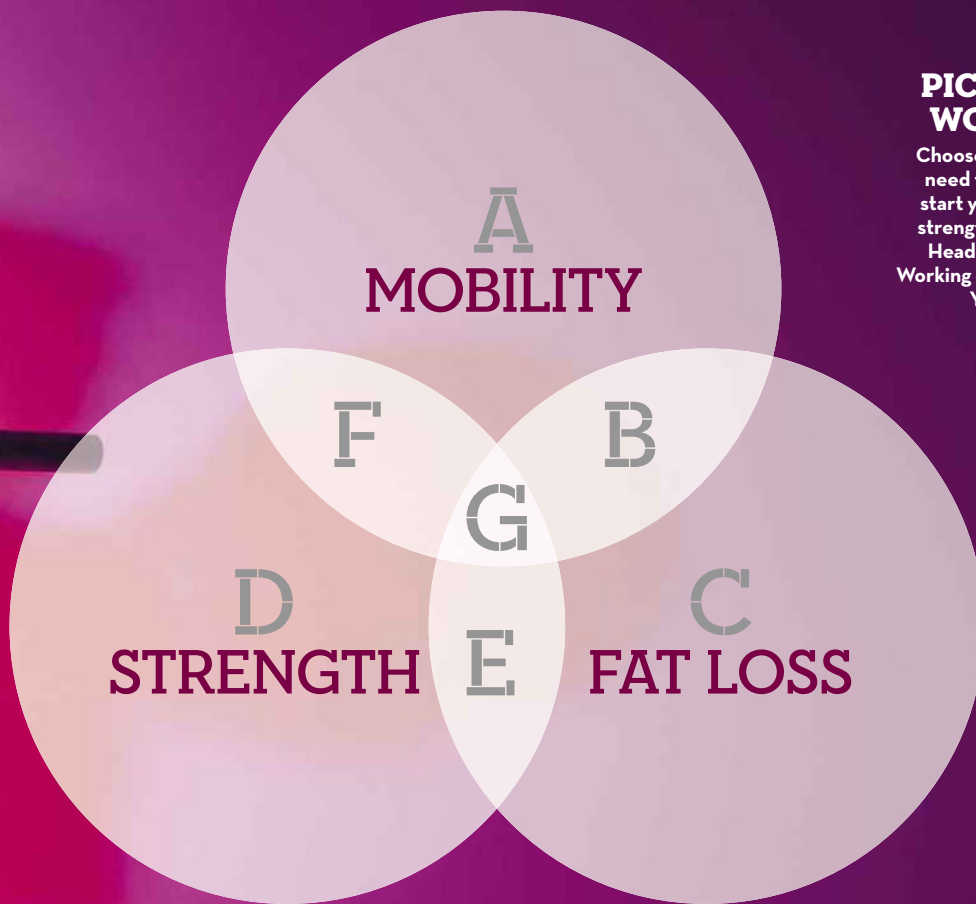
2 OR 6,  
YOU NEED  
FAT LOSS

4, 6, OR 7,  
YOU NEED  
STRENGTH





*Up front:  
better mobility  
translates to  
more muscle  
from moves like  
the front squat*



## PICK YOUR WORKOUT

Choose the areas you need to improve and start your plan. Need strength and fat loss? Head for workout D. Working on everything? You're a G man.

## A MOBILITY

Strong and lean? Good man. Do the following light kettlebell mobility workout once a week



### 1A GOBLET SQUAT

SETS 3 REPS 10 LIGHT/5 MEDIUM/10 HEAVY

Hold a kettlebell by its 'horns', then squat down until your elbows touch the insides of your knees. Drive up through your heels to stand. Between sets, do 30 seconds of 1B.



### 1B HIP FLEXOR STRETCH

With one knee on the floor and the other in front of you, put your hands behind your back and press forward to feel the stretch in your hip.



### 2A ONE-ARM PRESS

SETS 3 REPS 10 LIGHT/5 MEDIUM/10 HEAVY EACH SIDE

Stand holding the kettlebell racked at your shoulder. Brace your abs and glutes and press it straight overhead, keeping the bell against your forearm. In each set, complete the reps on one side, then switch. Between each set, do 30 seconds of 2B.



### 2B HIP FLEXOR RAINBOW

Starting from the hip flexor stretch position, bring one hand up and over your head in an arc until it's behind you. On the second stretch, use the other hand.

## B MOBILITY + FAT LOSS

Alternate between the Mobility workout (left) and the Tabata session below, doing each twice a week



### KETTLEBELL SWING TABATA

SETS 8 TIME 20SEC REST 10SEC

Hold a kettlebell in both hands with feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart. Snap your hips forward to 'swing' the bell to shoulder height. Let it fall naturally and go straight into the next swing. Repeat for 20 seconds and rest for ten.

## C FAT LOSS

It's time to focus on fat loss. Tabatas twice a week will help, but eating and sleeping better will help more. Here's your prescription



### AVOID FRANKENSTEIN FATS

'Give me a cow and a video on how to make butter, I can make butter,' says John. 'Give me corn, and I can't make margarine. It takes a lab. Mother Nature can't handle these fats, and neither can your body. Get rid of them.'



### CUT CARDBOARD CARBS

'By cardboard carbs I mean any carbohydrate found in a bag or a box. If it can last on a shelf for ten years, it'll stay in your body that long.' Swap it for colourful veg.



### DRINK MORE WATER

Your new rule? A sip of water before you have any other drink. It's what behavioural psychologist BJ Fogg calls a micro-habit - too small not to do, but likely to lead to bigger changes.



*On the bend:  
with improved  
mobility, you'll  
be ready to  
graduate to  
moves like the  
windmill*



## D STRENGTH

Getting stronger is the foundation of everything else. Do this kettlebell routine once a week, and try to increase the weight each week



### 1 PRESS

SETS 3 REPS 10 LIGHT/5 MEDIUM/  
10 HEAVY EACH SIDE

Stand with the kettlebell racked at your shoulder. Brace your abs and glutes and press it straight overhead, keeping the bell against your forearm. In each set, complete the reps on one side, then switch.



### 2 ONE-ARM ROW

SETS 3 REPS 10 LIGHT/5 MEDIUM/  
10 HEAVY EACH SIDE

Holding a kettlebell in one hand, bend forward at the hips and row it up towards your armpit. Lower slowly - don't drop it. In each set, complete the reps on one side, then switch.



### 3 SWING

SETS 3 REPS 30 LIGHT/  
15 MEDIUM/30 HEAVY

Hold a kettlebell in both hands with feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart. Snap your hips to 'swing' the bell to shoulder height. Let it fall naturally and go straight into the next swing.



### 4 PRESS-UP PLANK

TIME 2MIN

Get into the top position of a press-up with your glutes and abs braced and your fingers pointing forwards. Hold it for the prescribed time.



### 5 SUITCASE CARRY

DISTANCE MAX

Pick up a kettlebell in your weaker hand and walk as far as you can, keeping upright and braced. Put the weight down, then pick it up with your stronger hand and walk back.

## E STRENGTH+FAT LOSS

Getting strong will strip the fat faster. Do Workout D once a week, and add the following



### GOBLET SQUAT TABATA

SETS 8 TIME 20SEC REST 10SEC

Hold a kettlebell by its 'horns', then squat down until your elbows touch the insides of your knees. Drive up through your heels to stand.

## F STRENGTH+MOBILITY

To build muscle and get more mobile, combine the strength plan above with the stretches below. Bonus: by keeping your heart rate high, you'll burn body fat



### 1 HIP FLEXOR STRETCH

With one knee on the floor and the other in front of you, put your hands behind your back and press forward to feel the stretch in your hip.



### 3 BIRD DOG

Get on your hands and knees. Drive one heel straight behind you and lift the opposite hand to point straight forward. On the second stretch, use the other hand.



### 2 HIP FLEXOR RAINBOW

Starting from the hip flexor stretch position, bring one hand up and over your head in an arc until it's behind you. On the second stretch, use the other hand.



### 4 SIX-POINT ZENITH

Get on your hands and knees. Reach under your body with one hand. Hold the stretch for a second, then reach out and above you.

## G ALL OF THE ABOVE

Seems disastrous? Don't worry. Combine the above workouts as needed and add the following



### SLEEP BETTER

Turn off (or cover) any blinking lights in your bedroom to increase melatonin production and make sleep easier. You'll recover faster and shed fat.



### CUT BACK ON SUGAR

You don't need to ditch it entirely, but cut out any drinks containing the sweet stuff - it's too easy to ingest extra calories.



### WALK MORE

Non-Exercise Physical Activity (NEPA) will increase fat loss without compromising recovery. Get a phone-based activity tracker and aim for 10,000 steps a day.







# UPGRADE YOUR PERFORMANCE

WITH THE GOLD STANDARD OF SPORTS NUTRITION



**PRE & POST-WORKOUT**





# I'LL SMASH THROUGH MY PLATEAU

#CHALLENGEYOURSELF



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# FUEL

**P88** FAT-LOSS FISHCAKES **P90** MF PICKS THE BEST BLENDERS **P92** THREE WAYS TO ENJOY AVOCADO  
**P97** MEALS TO HAVE WITH A BEER **P104** THE GOOD GUT DIET **P106** KNOW YOUR MUSCLE SUPPLEMENTS

## Beat stress with your morning brew

*Feeling tense? Calm yourself with a breakfast Americano*

Coffee is known as an energy and focus aid – but it might not be the first thing you think of to reduce stress. While it's true that knocking back endless espressos will lead to jittery, sleep-deprived madness, enjoying the black stuff in moderation can actually help lower your levels of cortisol – a stress hormone that plays a key role in weight gain. That's according to a study in the US journal *Proceedings Of The National Academy Of Sciences*, which found that mice which drank water with added caffeine displayed reduced symptoms of stress when placed in pressure situations.

This supports research from UCL, which found that caffeine drinkers recorded 20% lower cortisol levels than those who had none, measured an hour after a stressful situation. Our advice: enjoy an energy-boosting black coffee with insulin-blunting cinnamon to kick-start your morning, then another an hour before hitting the gym to reduce stress, minimise weight gain and boost your performance.

# RELAX





# Cake with benefits

Feast on fat-burning fishcakes – with a bonus side of joint-soothing slaw

Tucking in to ready-made fishcakes – with their blood sugar-spiking combo of white breadcrumbs and potato – is a surefire way to harpoon your fat loss efforts. But fear not, fish-lovers: with a few simple ingredient upgrades, you can whip up healthy home-made

fishcakes that will fuel your fat loss efforts and satisfy your tastebuds.

This MF-enhanced recipe from Michelin-starred chef Adam Gray uses wholemeal breadcrumbs and mashed sweet potato to steady blood sugar levels and keep you full for longer, and provides muscle-building

protein in the form of haddock (as opposed to endangered cod) and salmon. It even features a quercetin-rich coleslaw side to help you recover after a tough gym session. Time to have your healthy cake and eat it. Adam Gray is executive chef at Skylon in London ([skylon-restaurant.co.uk](http://skylon-restaurant.co.uk))

**PREP TIME**  
15 minutes  
**COOKING TIME**  
10 minutes

per portion

**CALORIES**  
565

**PROTEIN**  
44g

**CARBS**  
72g

**FAT**  
13g



## INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)

**FOR THE FISHCAKES** 200g smoked haddock fillets, de-boned and skinned / 200g fresh salmon fillet, de-boned and skinned / 400g sweet potato, cooked and mashed / 50g curly parsley, finely chopped / 400ml semi-skimmed milk / Salt and pepper, to taste / 50g wholemeal flour / 180g fine wholemeal breadcrumbs / 3 eggs, beaten together with a splash of milk / 4tbsp rapeseed oil  
**FOR THE COLESLAW** ½ a large red cabbage / 2 carrots / 1 red onion / 6tbsp natural yogurt / Salt and pepper, to taste / 2tbsp dill, finely chopped

## TO MAKE

- Place the salmon and haddock in a saucepan and cover with the milk. Bring to the boil over a medium heat, then remove from the heat. Allow to cool to room temperature and then drain the milk off.
- Flake the fish and add it to the mashed sweet potato (this should still be warm) along with the parsley.
- Shape the mixture into four cylindrical cakes. Dip them in the flour, then in the beaten egg mix and finally the breadcrumbs, then sprinkle with some more breadcrumbs to ensure they are completely covered.
- Shallow-fry the fishcakes in the oil until golden brown on both sides, then place them on kitchen paper to remove any excess oil.
- Remove the white core from the red cabbage with a sharp knife and discard. Finely shred the red cabbage with the knife and place in a mixing bowl.
- Peel and grate the carrots. Peel and halve the onion and finely slice it, then add the carrot and onion to the red cabbage.
- Add the yogurt and dill and mix thoroughly.
- Season with salt and pepper and serve with the fishcakes.

## EXPERT UPGRADES

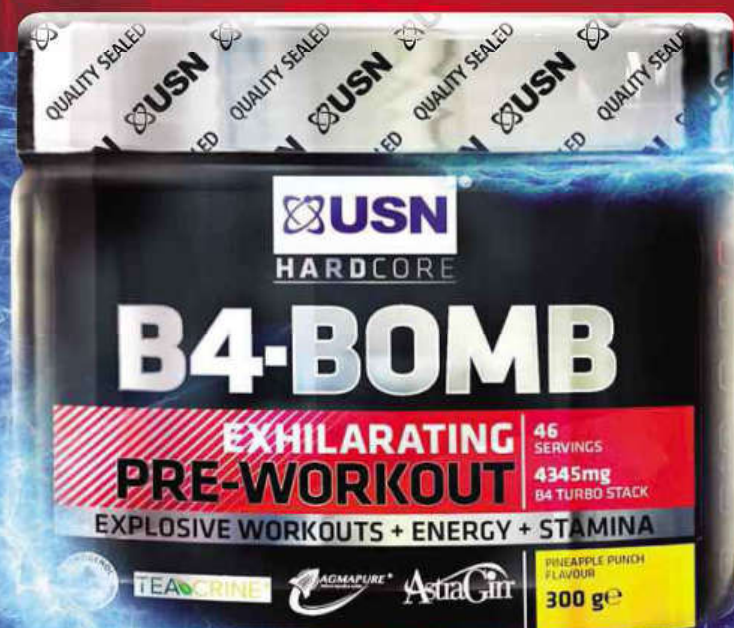
Add these for bonus health benefits

**LEMON JUICE** 'Squeeze the juice of half a lemon over your fish and sweet potato mix before frying to add soothing antioxidant bioflavonoids,' says functional medicine consultant and personal trainer Aaron Deere [kxlife.co.uk](http://kxlife.co.uk)

**PAPRIKA** 'Mix a teaspoonful with your mash for increased levels of metabolism-boosting capsaicin,' says performance nutritionist Nick Morgan [awordonnutrition.com](http://awordonnutrition.com)

**CHIVES** 'Add a teaspoonful of chopped chives with the parsley for extra bone-strengthening vitamin K,' says sports scientist Laurent Bannock [guruperformance.com](http://guruperformance.com)

# SMASH THROUGH YOUR BARRIERS



## HIT YOUR WORKOUT LIKE NEVER BEFORE

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# Meals in minutes

*Short of time? Whip up strength-enhancing soups and slimming smoothies on the go with MF's pick of the best new blenders*

## Vitamix S30

£399 [vitamix.co.uk](http://vitamix.co.uk)

While not quite as powerful as some of its beefier cousins, the S30 more than makes up for it with a sleek, space-saving design that's perfect for single servings and small kitchens. Variable speed controls allow you to adjust for tougher veg, while its dishwasher-safe parts ensure easy cleaning. It even comes with an exhaustive recipe book that should keep the most ambitious blender connoisseur occupied for months.



## Andrew James Premium Soup Maker And Blender

£58 [andrewjamesworldwide.com](http://andrewjamesworldwide.com)

This does more than just puree your soups - it cooks them too. A timer function lets you adjust the temperature and program it to slow-cook for up to 12 hours - ideal for prepping an evening meal before work - while its eight preset functions also allow simple smoothie-making.



## Novis Vita Juicer

£300 [lakeland.co.uk](http://lakeland.co.uk)

Claw back some much-needed time by ditching hand-squeezing your oranges in favour of this super-efficient juicer. Novis has added a citrus press to the Vita to help you extort maximum goodness with minimal hassle and avoid ready-made temptations.



## Nutri Ninja

£100 [ninjakitchen.eu](http://ninjakitchen.eu)

A one-trick martial artist with a powerful 1,000W motor that slices and dices everything from leafy greens and root veggies to nuts and seeds. Pro-extractor blades ensure maximum nutrient extraction, while its Auto IQ system offers one-button stress-free blending. And there's no doubt it has the coolest name. Veg to chop? Give it to the Ninja.



FITBRIT 2015

# PUSHING IT



**Team MF took on the redesigned FitBrit challenge. The results were... not entirely pleasant**

**T**his year, the annual FitBrit Challenge offers the most thorough test yet. A redesigned circuit means that the lung-busting cardio stays, but is joined by the need for power, explosiveness, balance and strength. Unfortunately, that doesn't mean it's any more pleasant to tackle at high speed.

'The box over jumps are the worst part,' says MF head of digital content Max Anderton. 'You know you have to keep the pace high, but your legs and glutes are ruined from the run and kettlebell swings.' The other worst part, of course, is the finish. 'Going all-out on the row means you can yank that handle just as hard as possible,' says features writer

Matt Huckle. 'Which is actually OK until the last few strokes... but you feel it afterwards.'

But while it's slightly tougher than in previous years, there's a good reason to get involved: with an Amateur category that excludes fitness professionals, you've got a better chance of podium glory than you might against a pack of men and women

who spend all day in the gym – and with a Masters category for the over-40s, there's no excuse to bow out thanks to age. Still don't fancy tackling the whole thing solo? It's also open to mixed teams, so there's really no excuse. Oh, and here's a final carrot: Team MF's times are below. Think you can beat us? There's only one way to find out...

## THE CHALLENGE



### RUN

600M 1% INCLINE



### KETTLEBELL SWING

30 REPS ↑ 24KG ↓ 16KG



### PLYO BOX OVER JUMP

20 REPS ↑ RED ↓ BLUE



### VIPR TILT

10 REPS ↑ 20KG ↓ 10KG



### BIKE

1.5KM LEVEL ↑ 12 ↓ 10



### PASSING PRESS-UP

10 REPS



### GOBLET SQUAT

20 REPS ↑ 24KG ↓ 16KG



### RAINBOW SLAM

30 REPS ↑ 9KG ↓ 5.5KG



### ROW

400M

## THE MF TIMES

Here's how the MF team fared when they attempted the 2015 FitBrit Challenge



**MATT HUCKLE,**  
FEATURES  
WRITER  
**11MIN**  
**32SEC**



**MAX ANDERTON,**  
HEAD OF DIGITAL  
CONTENT  
**12MIN**  
**1SEC**



**SAM RIDER,**  
FITNESS  
EDITOR  
**11MIN**  
**17SEC**

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You'll find form guides  
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on the site too



# SAY YES TO... AVOCADO

Of all the fruits, vegetables, powders and seeds to be branded with the dubious 'superfood' tag - equally beloved by culinary hipsters and savvy marketing men - few can boast the legit nutritional powerhouse credentials of the avocado. This creamy fruit offers chart-topping levels of an array of

key vitamins and minerals, including blood pressure-lowering potassium and immunity-boosting vitamin C, while its high fat content consists predominantly of monounsaturated fat - the healthy kind that will help to strengthen your heart rather than expand your waistline. Go green today and reap the rewards.

## 41%

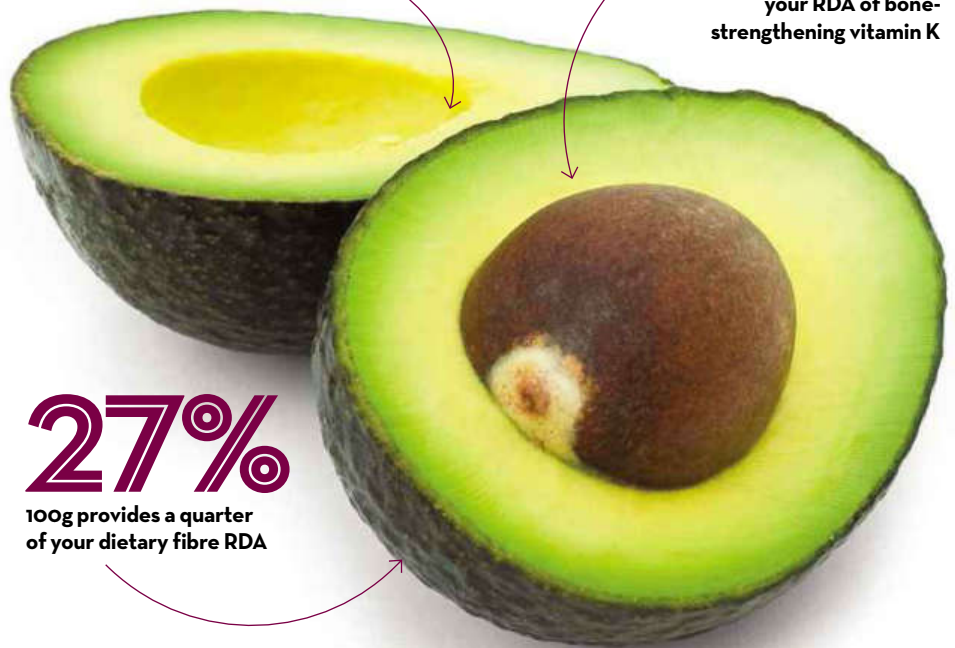
The percentage of your RDA of brain-boosting folate provided by one avocado

## 53%

One avocado contains more than half your RDA of bone-strengthening vitamin K

## 27%

100g provides a quarter of your dietary fibre RDA



## Three ways to love avocado

### BANANA AND AVOCADO SMOOTHIE

#### INGREDIENTS (SERVES 1)

1 banana / Handful of kale / 1 kiwi fruit / ½ an avocado / 400ml milk / 1tbsp honey

#### TO MAKE

Place the milk and honey in a blender and blend on full power for 20 to 30 seconds. Add the remaining ingredients one by one, blending for a further 20 to 30 seconds per ingredient, until all the ingredients have been added and the mixture is creamy and smooth.

RECIPE FROM [foodforfitness.co.uk](http://foodforfitness.co.uk)

### AVOCADO BAKED EGGS WITH PANCETTA

#### INGREDIENTS (SERVES 1)

1 large avocado / 2 free-range eggs / 70g pancetta / Handful of cress / Pepper, to taste

#### TO MAKE

Heat the oven to 200°C/gas mark 6. Halve the avocado, remove the stone and crack the eggs into the holes. Place in a casserole dish with the lid on and bake for eight minutes. Meanwhile, fry the pancetta four to five minutes until crisp. Remove from the pan and place on kitchen roll to remove excess oil. Sprinkle the cress, pepper and pancetta on the avocado and serve.

RECIPE FROM [karolgladki.com](http://karolgladki.com)

### AVOCADO PEAR ICE CREAM

#### INGREDIENTS (SERVES 1)

½ an avocado / ½ a pear / 125ml coconut milk / 2tbsp cinnamon / 2tbsp honey

#### TO MAKE

Dice the pear and place it in a bowl, sprinkle with cinnamon and freeze. Dice the avocado and freeze that too. Once they're frozen, place the pear and avocado cubes in a blender with the honey and coconut milk, and blend until you achieve the desired consistency.

RECIPE FROM [dessertbullet.com](http://dessertbullet.com)



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FOR  
BREAKFAST



YES  
FOR  
LUNCH



YES  
FOR  
DESSERT



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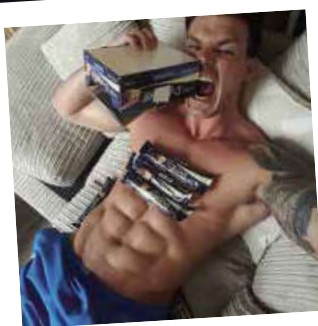
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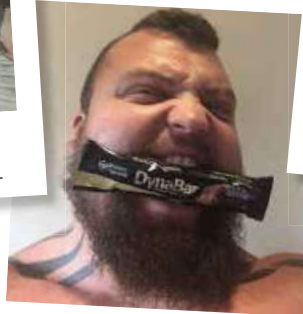
20g PROTEIN PER BAR

64 g e

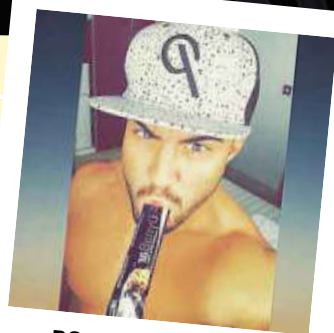
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Enjoy some spicy  
beer nuts with your  
favourite brew

# AN ARGUMENT FOR... FOOD + BEER

*It's time to rethink your relationship with food and booze. A post-pub takeaway needn't be a greasy doner kebab or an MSG-laden Chinese. And what's more, you can and should pair it with top-notch craft beer. Ross Dobson, author of new book *Food + Beer*, takes us through four simple nutrient-rich meals that you'll make again and again. Cheers to that!*



## SNACK

### SWAP DRY-ROASTED PEANUTS FOR

## BEER NUTS

They might be high in protein – and they're definitely a better option than crisps – but pub peanuts are also highly processed and packed with additives. Instead, try the all-natural beer nuts recipe below, which Dobson suggests enjoying 'with a crisp lager or hoppy brew'.

#### INGREDIENTS (serves 4)

500g raw peanuts, skin on / 1tbsp smoked paprika / 1tbsp dried thyme / 1tsp chilli flakes / 1tsp sea salt / 1tbsp soft brown sugar / 2tbsp olive oil

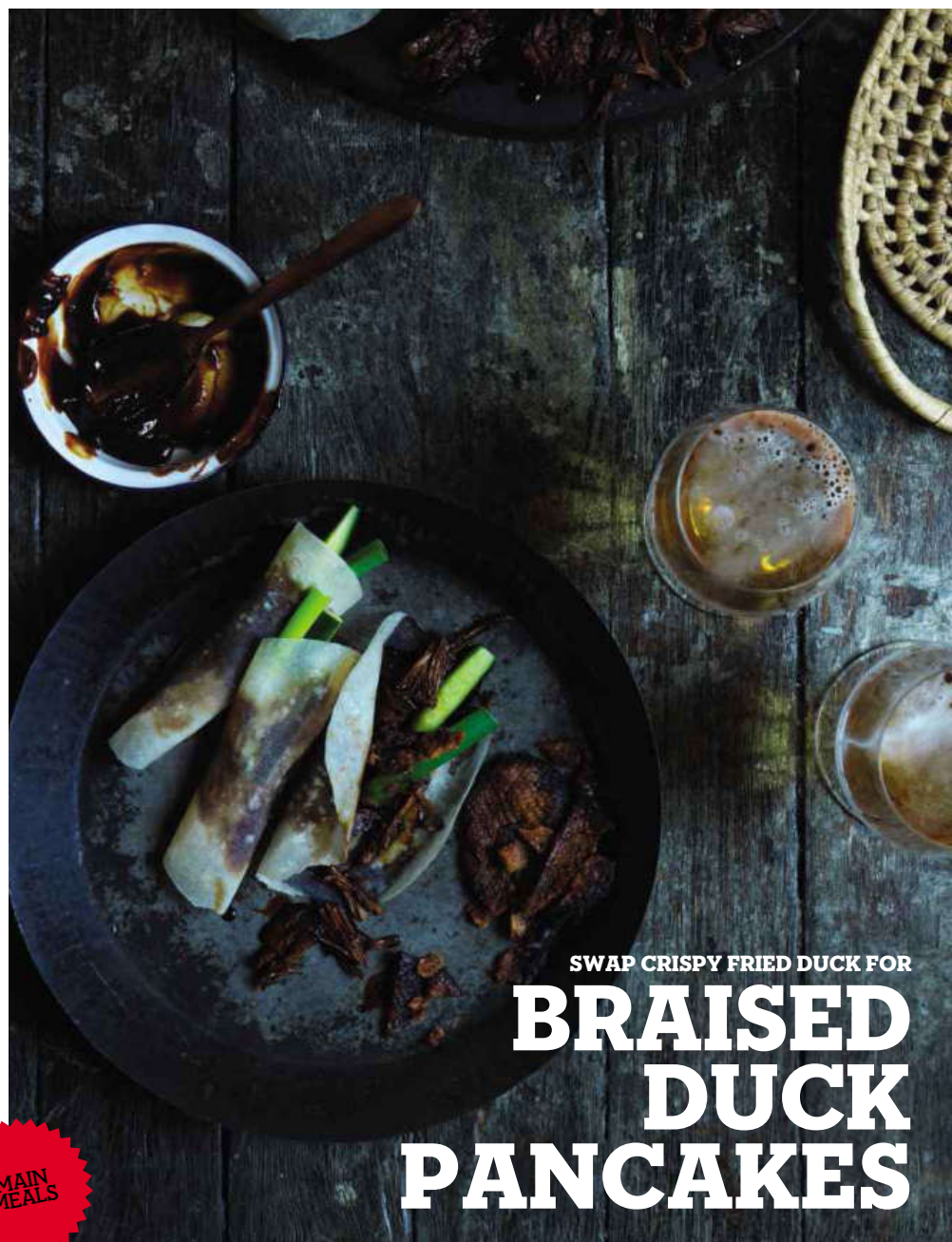
#### TO MAKE

Preheat the oven to 180°C / gas 4. Line a baking tray with baking paper and put the peanuts in a bowl. Combine the paprika, thyme, chilli, salt, sugar and oil to make a paste. Mix the peanuts with the paste, stirring with a large metal spoon to coat them evenly. Scatter the nuts on the baking tray, transfer to the oven and roast for seven to eight minutes or until they've darkened. Shake the tray and mix the nuts, then roast for another four to five minutes. Remove from the oven and leave to cool before serving. Beer nuts will keep in an airtight container for several weeks.

#### NUTRITIONIST'S VERDICT

'Coating the peanuts in olive oil and chilli provides a potent anti-inflammatory combo,' says functional medicine consultant and personal trainer Aaron Deere (kxlife.co.uk). 'The oil contains linoleic acid and the chilli is rich in vitamin E, both of which help your muscles recover after a tough gym session.'

## MAIN MEALS



### SWAP CRISPY FRIED DUCK FOR

## BRAISED DUCK PANCAKES

Few takeaways are as obscenely calorific as crispy duck, which isn't surprising when you consider that cooking it involves immersing the entire bird in a bath of bubbling oil. This home-made alternative braises the duck with health-enhancing spices for a leaner meal that Dobson recommends you enjoy 'with a crisp, light lager to complement the crispness of the cucumber'.

#### INGREDIENTS

(makes 12 pancakes)  
2 duck breast fillets, skin on / 60ml dark soy sauce / 1tbsp soft brown sugar / 2 spring onions, cut into 3-4cm lengths / 3 garlic cloves, crushed / 5 thin slices of

fresh ginger / 2 star anise / 1 cinnamon stick / 1 cucumber, cut into 3-4cm strips / 12 ready-made Peking duck pancakes

#### TO MAKE

Preheat the oven to 150°C / gas 2. Put the soy sauce, sugar, spring onion, garlic, ginger, star anise and cinnamon in a small baking dish or ovenproof pan. Sit the duck breasts in the dish. Cover tightly with foil and bake for three hours until the meat is tender and easy to shred. Peel the skin off each breast in one piece and place the skins on a baking tray lined with baking paper (reserve the braising liquid). Turn up the oven to 240°C /

gas 9 and roast the skin for ten minutes or until dark and crisp. Allow to cool, then break or slice into strips. Put the breast meat in a bowl with 60ml of the braising liquid. Using two forks, finely shred the meat onto a serving plate. Add some duck, spring onion and cucumber to each pancake (hoi-sin sauce optional) then wrap them and serve with the skin strips.

#### NUTRITIONIST'S VERDICT

'Using fresh spring onion provides a sizeable hit of bone-strengthening vitamin K,' says Deere. 'The garlic also has antibacterial properties which will help to boost your immune system.'



SWAP DONER KEBABS FOR

# ROASTED SHAWARMA

## FOOD + BEER

FUEL

Most takeaway kebabs make for grim viewing in the cold light of day, with greasy meat stuffed into stodgy pittas and drowned in sugar-rich sauces. This upgraded version swaps soggy lettuce for crisp salad leaves topped with yogurt and fresh lemon juice, which according to Dobson 'works perfectly with a dark ale'.

### INGREDIENTS (serves 4)

1 boned lamb leg (roughly 2kg), skin on / 1 pack of wholemeal flatbreads / 1 bag of mixed salad leaves / 500ml Greek yogurt / 1 lemon

### SPICE PASTE

2tbsp cumin seeds / 2tsp black peppercorns / 1tbsp sweet paprika / 1 cinnamon stick broken into pieces / 2tsp ground ginger / 1tbsp sea salt / Bunch of coriander, chopped / 2 garlic cloves, chopped / 60ml olive oil

### TO MAKE

Heat a small frying pan over a high heat. Add the cinnamon, cumin and peppercorns and cook for a few seconds, until the spices smoke and pop. Tip into a bowl and stir in the paprika, ginger and salt. Allow to cool, then grind to a rough powder using a spice mill or pestle and mortar. Stir in the coriander, garlic and oil to make a paste, rub all over the lamb and refrigerate for at least two hours (overnight is ideal). Heat the oven to 220°C/gas 7. Place the lamb in a roasting dish, skin up, and roast for 20 minutes. Add 250ml cold water to the dish, pouring it around the lamb, not over it. Cover the dish tightly with foil. Reduce the heat to 150°C/gas 2 and bake for four hours, or until the lamb is falling apart. Remove from the oven and leave covered for 20-30 minutes to rest. Shred the lamb or serve in chunks, wrapped in flatbread, with salad leaves, yogurt and lemon wedges.

### NUTRITIONIST'S VERDICT

'Cumin is an excellent source of manganese, which helps the body metabolise fat and carbs,' says Deere. 'Ginger has been found to help reduce blood glucose triglyceride levels, which can be beneficial to heart health.'



If your idea of Chinese cuisine involves fried dumplings and prawn crackers, you're missing out - and probably sabotaging your six-pack. This alternative is packed with muscle-building protein and Chinese flavours, which Dobson suggests enjoying 'with a cold, palate-cleansing Asian pale ale or light lager'.

#### INGREDIENTS (serves 6)

1kg pork scotch fillet / 1tbsp light soy sauce / 1tbsp Chinese rice wine / 1tsp sugar / Coriander sprigs / Steamed rice and Asian greens to serve  
**BARBECUE SAUCE** 250ml tomato purée / 60ml plum sauce / 1tsp sesame oil / 150g sugar / 1tsp Chinese five-spice / ½tsp white pepper

#### TO MAKE

Cut the pork lengthways into fillets about 5cm thick and place in a bowl. Stir the barbecue sauce ingredients together to dissolve the sugar, then pour over the pork. Rub the sauce evenly into the meat. Cover and refrigerate for three to six hours, or overnight. Heat the oven to 220°C/gas 7. Line a baking tray with baking paper. Lay the pork on the tray, reserving the excess sauce for basting. Roast the pork for 20 minutes or until the edges begin to char. Turn and cook for 20 more minutes. Reduce the heat to 160°C/gas 2-3 and roast for two hours, brushing with sauce and turning every 20 minutes, until the pork is tender. Remove from the oven and leave to rest for 30 minutes. Combine the soy sauce, rice wine and sugar in a bowl. Pour in 125ml water and stir. Slice the pork, drizzle with some of the soy sauce mixture and garnish with coriander. Serve with steamed rice and Asian greens.

#### NUTRITIONIST'S VERDICT

'Tomatoes are rich in lycopene, which helps to increase sperm production,' says Deere. 'Sesame oil is full of heart-healthy monounsaturated fat.'

All recipes from Food + Beer by Ross Dobson (Murdoch Books, £18.99)

Photography Jason Loucas



SWAP SWEET AND SOUR PORK FOR

# DIY BBQ PORK





SWAP  
MASS-PRODUCED  
LAGER FOR  
**CRAFT  
BEER**

'Four main ingredients go into a craft beer: hops, malt, yeast and water,' says Sarah Warman of BrewDog, producer of a range of award-winning craft beers. 'Mass-produced lager and ales, on the other hand, are usually made with adjuncts such as rice, corn, preservatives and colourants, none of which do your waistline any favours.' Enjoy your brew as nature intended, with Warman's pick of the best craft beers to suit any meal.



**BREWDOG NANNY STATE**

£1.80 [brewdog.com](http://brewdog.com)  
'Light dishes work really well with elegant, low-alcohol beers,' says Warman. 'Nanny State is 0.5% ABV and just 30 calories a bottle, but it's still got plenty of malt character - perfect for a refreshing non-boozy lunch.'

**BRASSERIE DE BLAUGIES SAISON LA MONEUSE**

£7.50 [brasserieblaugies.com](http://brasserieblaugies.com)  
'Saisons are light, spritzzy beers, similar to white wine but with a deeper body and more peppery notes,' says Warman. 'They're ideal for meals with different textures and flavours, like tapas, although at 8% ABV it's worth keeping an eye on how much you drink.'

**CROOKED STAVE CLASSIC ORIGINS**

£12.50 [crookedstave.com](http://crookedstave.com)  
'This beer is aged in burgundy barrels so it absorbs the flavours and textures of the wine, much like a classic Flemish red beer such as Rodenbach,' says Warman. 'It mirrors a lot of the qualities of a great red, and as such it's ideal with steaks or red meat-heavy stews.'

**KERNEL EXPORT STOUT LONDON 1890**

£3 [thekernelbrewery.com](http://thekernelbrewery.com)  
'A heavier stout provides a lovely contrast with the creaminess of a dairy-rich meal like carbonara,' says Warman. 'This recipe - which as the name suggests was first conceived way back in 1890 - offers the optimum level of sweetness.'

**BEAVERTOWN GAMMA RAY**

£3 [beavertownbreweryco.uk](http://beavertownbreweryco.uk)  
'The slightly bitter taste of India pale ales (IPAs) complements the spicy heat of curries and stir-fries,' says Warman. 'The Gamma Ray is a particularly bold, bitter and fruity example.' **MF**







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Every month for a year, nutritionist Drew Price follows a different nutrition strategy. This issue...

# The Good Gut Diet

## THE BASICS

A bacteria-focused diet doesn't sound particularly simple (or appetising), but the Good Gut Diet doesn't require a science degree - it's designed to improve all-round health with foods that increase the variety and levels of 'good' bacteria in the gut.

## THE CLAIM

The creators, Justin and Erica Sonnenburg of Stanford University, argue that there's a direct link between the thousands of strains of bacteria that live in the human gut and a variety of broader health issues. By eating foods that support the 'good' bacteria and avoiding those that the 'bad' bacteria rely on, you can improve your gut profile or 'biome', which in turn will aid weight loss, enhance immune function, increase resistance to allergies and improve mood and cognition.

## THE METHOD

The diet doesn't suggest specific calorie targets, macronutrient splits or even portion sizes - the focus is solely on foods that should or shouldn't be included.

Foods in the 'good' bacteria-friendly category include dark vegetables and berries, which are rich in key phytonutrients, along with most herbs and spices. Wholegrain carbs and high-fibre foods in general are encouraged, as are live and fermented probiotic foods such as yogurt, along with less well-known options such as kefir, kimchi and natto.

Frowned-upon foods include anything high in sugar or starchy white carbs, including fizzy drinks, overcooked vegetables and pulp-free fruit juices, which the authors say are fully absorbed by the body before they reach the small intestine where they're most needed. Saturated fats are also singled out as main offenders, because they tend to cause inflammation in the gut.

## THE REALITY

Thinking about nutrition in terms of the zoo you're carrying in your stomach requires a bit



This bacteria-friendly diet includes fermented foods and lots of fibre

of an attitude shift, but the diet does come with a straightforward seven-day eating plan to get you started. It doesn't specify portion sizes, which leaves you guessing at times, but generally the quantity of high-fibre food ensures you don't overeat. I'd recommend upping your fibre intake gradually during the first few days, because too much too soon can lead to bloating and wind.

The menu itself is tasty and varied but most choices are preparation-heavy, so be prepared to cook big batches in advance. The diet also provides plenty of background info to help you navigate restaurants menus and eating out, though it will certainly take the fun out of it.

One surprising side effect was that it reinvigorated my gym sessions. Of all the monthly diets I've followed for this series (this is the tenth), the Good Gut Diet definitely coincided with my most energised and productive weights sessions.

## THE RESULTS

Body composition testing at Speedflex (speedflex.com) showed I'd added a little muscle mass, which was a bonus considering the emphasis of the diet is general health. And although my levels of visceral fat (the dangerous stuff that's stored around the organs) stayed the same, my LDL cholesterol - which hadn't budged during any other diet - dropped by nearly 20%, finally bringing my levels into the 'ideal' range. Measuring the impact on mood and mental state was trickier - it's always hard to rule out a placebo effect - but I did feel as if both were improved.

## THE VERDICT

If you're looking for a diet that works long-term and is aimed at whole body health - and you get on with the food choices involved - the Good Gut is worth trying. If it's a quick fat-burning fix you're after, you're better off looking elsewhere.

## GUT CHECK

Drew used an unusual mixture of prebiotic and probiotic foods to improve his gut biome. Here are some of the best

### Kefir

Live yogurt milk drink with a slight fizz to it and a dose of muscle-building protein.



### Kimchi

A Korean dish made of fermented cabbage with garlic and spices. It's rich in immunity-enhancing vitamin A.

### Kombucha

A form of Asian tea brimming with brain-boosting folate.



### Miso

A fermented soy product used for soups that provides metabolism-boosting vitamin B6.

### Natto

Fermented beans packed with bone-strengthening vitamin K.





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# Muscle-building supps that work

*These performance enhancers will help you add lean mass rather than bloating bulk*

## REPAIR AND REBUILD WITH... **WHEY PROTEIN**

Arguably the most popular supp of all, this lean protein source helps the body to repair and grow new muscle tissue. It's rapidly and easily absorbed, making it the ideal supplement to take in the post-workout period when your body is primed for muscle synthesis. It can also lower hunger levels, thanks to its influence on the hormone ghrelin. A good quality whey supplement will dramatically increase your daily protein intake - without adding unnecessary extra calories, carbs or fat to your diet.

### **NEED TO KNOW**

Be wary of whey protein products that contain bulking agents such as sucralose and polydextrose, which reduce the quality and can lead to a variety of unpleasant health issues.

## SUPERCHARGE YOUR WORKOUTS WITH... **CREATINE**

This organic acid acts like a back-up power source for your muscles, allowing you to lift heavier for longer during tough weights sessions. It also helps to boost brain power and has been shown to reduce the risk of health problems such as arthritis and Parkinson's disease. Creatine draws water and nutrients into your muscles, enabling them to regenerate their stores of adenosine triphosphate (ATP), which they use as fuel during bouts of intense exercise.

### **NEED TO KNOW**

Look out for micronised creatine products, which mix faster and dissolve more completely than regular monohydrate versions, making for a far more palatable drink.

## KEEP BUILDING OVERNIGHT WITH... **CASEIN**

Found in dairy products, casein is a protein that takes hours to break down in your body, which means it keeps building and repairing muscle during periods of fasting - including while you're asleep. It takes longer to digest because of its tendency to clot into a gel-like substance that then 'drip-feeds' protein into your bloodstream.

### **NEED TO KNOW**

Hydrolysed casein products are processed in a way that often damages certain components of the protein. Instead, opt for the superior micro-filtered variety.

## AVOID MUSCLE BREAKDOWN WITH... **BCAAs**

Branched-chain amino acids (BCAAs) are made up of three essential amino acids: leucine, isoleucine and valine. These help to prevent muscle breakdown, which is ideal if you're trying to lose body fat without forfeiting any muscle mass. They also help your body heal faster and build more muscle too.

### **NEED TO KNOW**

The optimal ratio of leucine to isoleucine to valine is 2:1:1, which will help to boost your energy levels during a workout.



### **MF'S DEPUTY EDITOR BEN SAYS...**

As a general rule, avoid buying supplements that are high in sugar. They might cost less - typically the added sugar just masks the poor quality of the other ingredients - but you'll be short-changing yourself in the long run, especially when it comes to protein supplements such as whey and casein.

Fast-acting whey protein is ideal after a workout

Slow-digesting casein is perfect before bed



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*Find out more at [mensfitness.co.uk/fitbrit](http://mensfitness.co.uk/fitbrit)*

## SNACK ATTACK

Don't put all your effort into your training and meals only to let snacking get the better of you. Multipower nutritionist Drew Price's no-bake protein and seed bars will satisfy your cravings without raiding the biscuit tin.

### INGREDIENTS

- 90g fine ground oats
- 3 scoops of Multipower 100% Whey Isolate French Vanilla or Rich Chocolate protein
- 2tbsp mixed seeds
- 150ml almond milk
- 5tbsp flour

### TO MAKE

- Mix all the ingredients together.
- Spread the mixture flat in a non-stick pan or dish.
- Chill in the fridge for 45 minutes.

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**to get 25% OFF at**  
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## TIME TO KILL

Will Kane is one of the UK's leading CrossFit stars. Here's his game plan for knocking seconds off your FitBrit time

### ARM YOURSELF

'Use your arms when you're doing the box jump overs and make sure you land on your heels and with soft knees,' says Kane. 'Use your momentum to rebound and keep going – it's more efficient.'

### SIT UP STRAIGHT

'Don't try to row with just your arms – get your legs involved,' says Kane. 'Keep your torso upright so you don't fatigue your abs. Practise unstrapping your feet so you don't fumble on the day.'

### FULL TILT

'Don't fall into the trap of trying to move side to side with the ViPR tilt,' says Kane. 'Instead, do a reverse lunge. It's more stable and you'll have more power to drive back up.'

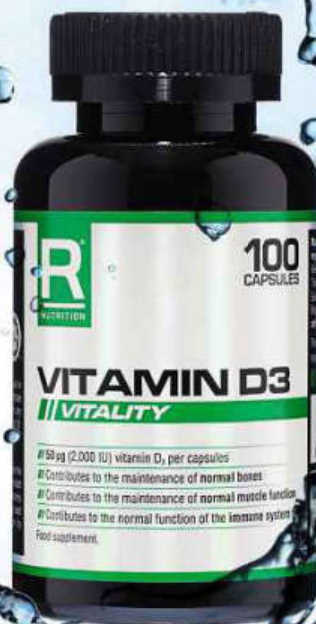
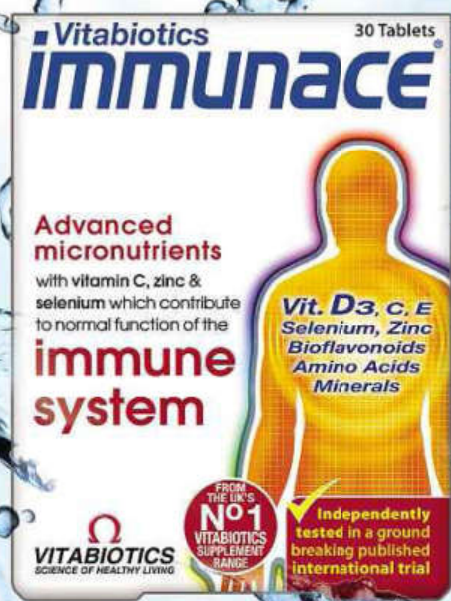
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**P127** BUILD NFL ALL-STAR FITNESS **P132** GET OBSTACLE RACE READY **P139** 4-WEEK BIG ARMS PLAN

## DRINK TO THIRST

Taking on too much fluid when you exercise can be deadly - but how do you know when you've had enough?

High school American football player Zyrees Oliver downed two gallons (7.5 litres) of water and two gallons of Gatorade to stop painful cramps during a practice session last year. The next day he was dead. The 17-year-old had suffered exercise-associated hyponatraemia (EAH) - also known as water intoxication - where an excess of fluid diluted his body's sodium levels resulting in fatal brain swelling.

New recommendations published in the *Clinical Journal Of Sport Medicine* say athletes can reduce their risk

of EAH by drinking only when thirsty. The only problem is that heat exposure, temperature and the levels of sodium in your diet can scramble your readings of when you're hydrated. Marathon runners, with frequent access to water stations, are especially at risk.

'The deadly effects of dehydration are well known,' says Dr Susan Yeargin, an expert in the field of thermoregulation and hydration behaviours at the University of South Carolina. 'Unfortunately, some people take hydration to the other

extreme leading to water intoxication without realising it.

'The best way to reduce the risk of EAH is to establish your individual sweat rate,' Yeargin says. Learn yours by inputting your weight change and consumed fluid during exercise into the Korey Stinger Institute's sweat rate calculator at [bit.ly/1gK5dcl](http://bit.ly/1gK5dcl). 'Sweat rates increase in heat so recalculate yours for different environments.'

In some cases, EAH has few to no effects for the first 24 hours after physical exercise but symptoms can include headache,

vomiting, confusion and seizures. 'An early warning sign is sudden weight gain and puffiness in your fingers and toes,' says Yeargin. 'So check the tightness of rings and your watch after training.'

### THE BOTTOM LINE

Endurance sports put you at the greatest risk of over-hydrating. Discover your sweat rate - the amount of fluid you lose through sweat per hour - to determine how much you should drink to reduce the risk.



## THE COACH **Dan Lawrence**



**THE PLAN** 'Do this complex three times a week,' says Lawrence. 'Start with a weight that allows you to do all the moves with good form. Otherwise you'll have to rest, which defeats the object of this workout.'

### WEEK 1

SETS 4 REPS 8  
REST 2MIN

### WEEK 2

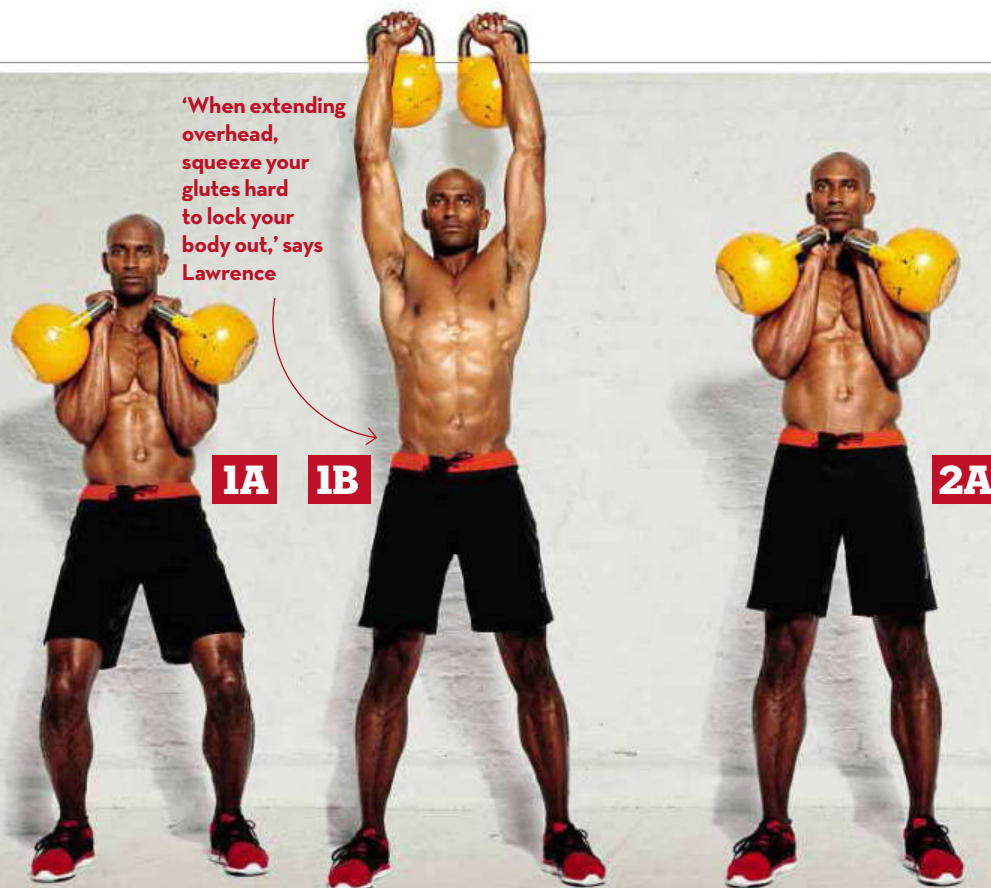
SETS 4 REPS 10  
REST 2MIN

### WEEK 3

SETS 5 REPS 8  
REST 90SEC

### WEEK 4

SETS 5 REPS 10  
REST 90SEC



# GET LEAN FAST

*Shred belly fat and build core strength with this two-kettlebell complex*

Higher, lower. No, we're not watching repeats of *Play Your Cards Right*. We're talking about the merits of alternating between upper- and lower-body exercises – known as peripheral heart action (PHA) – for fat loss. PHA

allows you to perform at high intensity for longer because your upper-body muscles can recover while the lower ones are working and vice versa. 'The focus is to torch fat, but you'll also boost your grip, core and functional

strength' says Dan Lawrence (train2winboxing.com), fitness coach for British boxer George Groves and creator of this plan. Do all six moves back to back, and use the table above for your four-week fat-loss plan.

## 1// PUSH PRESS

Hold the kettlebells at shoulder height with the bell resting on the top of your forearm. Lower into a quarter squat and drive up powerfully, using the momentum to press the weights overhead.







**2B**

'Focus on screwing the heel, ball and little toe of each foot into the floor for a stable base'



**3A**



**3B**

'Draw the kettlebell level with your bellybutton, not your sternum, to target all your back muscles'

## 2// SQUAT

Hold the kettlebells in the rack position with your core strong and chest up. Push your hips back to lower into a deep squat, keeping your knees wide apart. Drive your hips forwards as you stand.



## 3// BENT-OVER ROW

Keep your knees slightly bent and hinge forwards from your hips until your torso is almost parallel with the floor. Pull your shoulder blades back then draw the weights straight up either side of your body.

## 4// LUNGE

With the kettlebells racked, take a big step forwards, keeping your front knee in line with your toes. Keep your body upright as you lower your back knee towards the floor then drive back up to return to the start. Alternate sides for all reps.

## 5// THRUSTER

With the kettlebells racked, lower into a full squat, then drive up, pushing your hips forwards powerfully, and press the weights straight overhead.

## 6// FARMER'S WALK

By now your grip will be screaming, but hold on. Hold the kettlebells by your sides with straight arms, keep your body tall and chest up, and walk forwards. One metre is one rep. Pick a finish line and release the weights when you pass it.



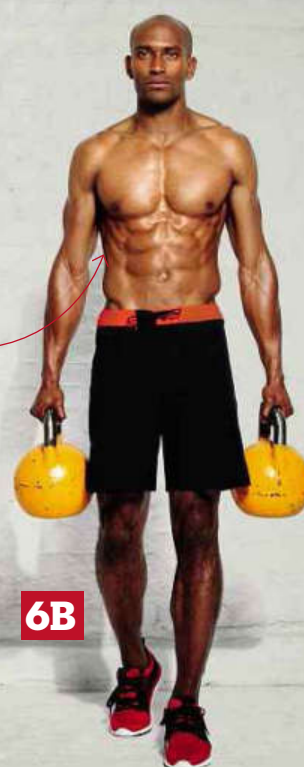
**5B**

'Your legs will keep going long after your shoulders fatigue so make the most of the momentum from the leg drive'



**6A**

'Your lats are powerful stabilisers for your lumbar spine so pin your shoulders back to keep you upright'



**6B**



# GREATNESS OUT REQUIRES GREATNESS IN

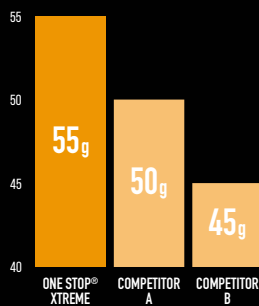
We created One Stop® Xtreme, the all-in-one bodybuilding supplement to outperform all of the competition, not just in formulation but also in quality. The combination of EU grass fed whey protein, Creapure® creatine, patented Albion ultra bioavailable minerals, significant use of additional amino acids and patented neutraceuticals means that One Stop® Xtreme is categorically guaranteed to deliver more than the competition, or your money back.

**We don't hold back on the formulation. All we would ask is whether you're holding back on the right choice?**

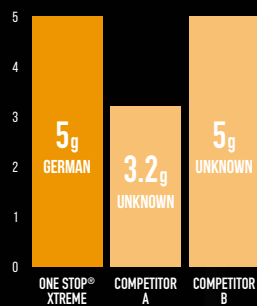
## THE FACTS

**55g** PROTEIN | **10.3g** BCAA'S | **3g** L-LEUCINE | **1.8g** BETA ALANINE | **73g** LOW GI CARBOHYDRATE

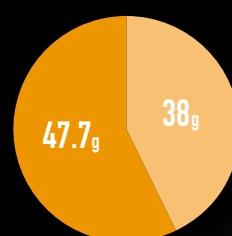
### PROTEIN CONTENT



### CREATINE CONTENT



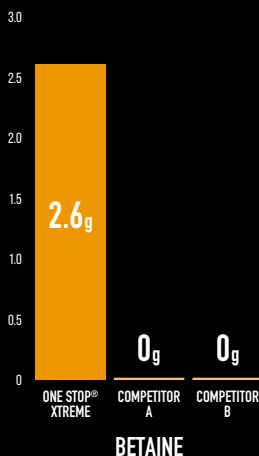
### PROTEIN vs CARBOHYDRATE



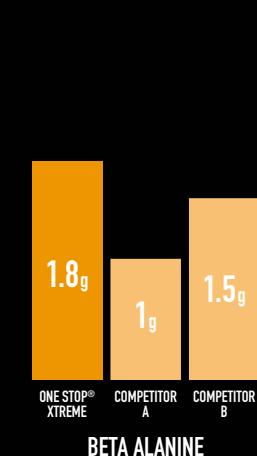
### FURTHER FACTS

ONE STOP® XTREME	COMPETITOR A	COMPETITOR B
MADE IN INFORMED-SPORT SITE?		
YES	NO	NO
FULL MONEY BACK GUARANTEE?		
YES	NO	NO
SOY PROTEIN FREE?		
YES	NO	NO
FRIENDLY BACTERIA?		
YES	NO	NO

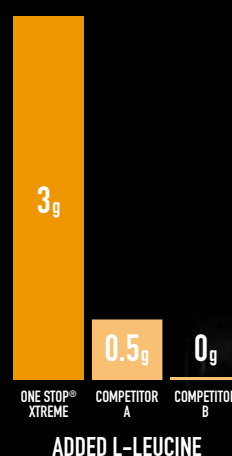
### AMINO ACID CONTENT



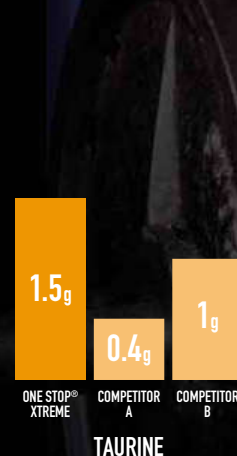
BETAINE



BETA ALANINE



ADDED L-LEUCINE



TAURINE

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MANUFACTURED IN AN INFORMED-SPORT REGISTERED FACILITY.



# R

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# SWIM 750M EASY

Confidently cover a sprint-distance triathlon swim with our masterplan

**'N**o sport can fatigue you quite like swimming if done incorrectly,' says Mark Foster, one of Britain's most successful swimmers and owner of an unrivalled V-shape torso that he sculpted in the water, not the weights room. Brute strength is about as useful as lead-weighted swimming shorts if

you want to cover 750m – a sprint triathlon distance – in one go. Instead, taking the time to improve your front crawl technique will allow you to cover more challenging distances in the pool and use the low-impact benefits of swimming to improve your cardio. Use the tips and plan below and watch your shirt-filling V-shape develop.

## THE TECHNIQUE

Become more efficient in the water to go further with these essential form tips from Steven Shaw, founder of the Shaw Method swimming technique.



### HEAD ALIGNMENT

'Lifting your head makes your pelvis drop, which slows you down. Look straight down and think of the back of your neck being long.'

### KICKING

'The quads are very oxygen-hungry muscles. During long swims they're less for propulsion than for stability, so kick your legs between two and four times per stroke. Keep your ankles loose and only make small movements, kicking down and letting your leg float back up.'

### BREATHING

'Focus on the out breath. Exhale in a controlled stream and, as you turn your head so that your mouth is out of the water, let the air in naturally. Don't gulp or hold your breath. Breathe every three or five strokes for long swims – breathing only on one side is like walking with a limp.'

### RECOVERY STROKE

'Don't pull your leading arm back for the stroke until your other arm has entered the water in front of your head. This allows you to glide further with each stroke and engage your back muscles fully to maximise power.'

### ROTATION

'Most people are too flat in the water,' says Shaw. 'Rotate your body, not your head, to open your chest to either side with each stroke. This makes you more streamlined, and allows you to reach further and generate more power with every stroke.'

**THE PLAN** Build your comfort and fitness in the water with Foster's four-week plan. 'Use the sessions below to work on your speed and endurance,' says Foster. 'Some will be quick, some longer, but aim to make each session last between 30min and an hour by adding gentle warm-ups and warm-downs. The longer you're in the water, the better you'll get.'

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT/SUN
WEEK 1	16x25m with 10sec rest	REST	8x50m with 15sec rest	REST	REST	4x100m with 20sec rest
WEEK 2	8x50m with 15sec rest	REST	4x100m with 20sec rest	REST	REST	2x200m with 30sec rest
WEEK 3	16x50m with 20sec rest	REST	8x100m with 20sec rest	45min gentle backstroke active recovery	REST	4x200m with 30sec rest
WEEK 4	4x200m with 15sec rest	REST	2x400m with 20sec rest	45min gentle breaststroke active recovery	REST	1x750m





## REVERSE THE DAMAGE

'Swimming front crawl three times a week puts a lot of strain on your shoulders because they're constantly rotating in one direction,' says Shaw. 'Improve your mobility and balance your body by foam-rolling your lats under each arm, and finish each session with 100-200m of gentle backstroke as a warm-down.'

Steven Shaw and Mark Foster represent Swimming Nature, a leading provider of swimming lessons throughout the UK. For more information visit [swimmingnature.com](http://swimmingnature.com)



## THE BASICS

### NAME

555 Fitness

### ESTABLISHED

2013

### AVAILABILITY

Worldwide

### COST

Free

### BENEFIT

Cardiovascular fitness



# BURN FAT LIKE A FIREFIGHTER

MF  
TESTED

*A new firefighter-run charity is aiming to reduce line-of-duty-deaths but what can it do for your heart health? MF's Sam Rider trains like a fireman for a month to find out*





MF's very own Fireman Sam sets out to make himself fit for service in four weeks



**F**iremen, unlike journalists, have a reputation for being girlfriend-distractingly fit. But a recent study has exploded that theory. Four out of five firefighters in the US are overweight or obese, according to research by New York's Skidmore College into cardiac fatalities among first responders. And a recent *New York Times* report found that the firefighter's number one killer is cardiac arrest. That's right - a weak heart, rather than risks of carbon monoxide poisoning and battling 600°C blazes, is their biggest threat.

To combat this, 555 Fitness (named after the traditional bell system that's rung when a firefighter is killed in the line of duty) was set up two years ago with the aim of improving cardiovascular fitness among firefighters - something that's virtually ignored in the US after the initial fitness tests. And because all you need is access to Instagram to join, the movement is growing in the UK too. To find out how - and what benefits there are for people in less dangerous professions - I took on the mantle of Fireman Sam for a month.

### THE METHOD

Every day 555 Fitness posts two free workouts - one at a fairly beginner level



and the other for the more advanced.

These resemble the type of high-intensity circuit-style training typical of CrossFit's workout of the day (WOD).

This is largely because the men behind it are certified personal trainers and CrossFit instructors - but the sport's functional fitness elements fit perfectly with the daily demands of fighting fire. After all, the world's fittest man, four-time CrossFit champ Rich Froning, used to work as a firefighter.

'A firefighter's life is high-intensity,' says 36-year-old Lieutenant Rob 'Pip' Piparo, the New Jersey firefighter who co-founded 555 fitness in 2013. 'We go from doing nothing to the most adrenaline-fuelled event you could experience in a matter of seconds. So the "ready for anything" element of CrossFit

### UK FITNESS TEST

## ARE YOU FIREFIGHTER FIT?

*Could you pass the UK national firefighter physical tests?*

UK firefighters have to pass the Chester Treadmill Test to show that their cardio fitness makes the grade - but that's not all

### CHESTER TREADMILL TEST

A test of endurance. Walk on a treadmill set at 6.2km. Every two minutes increase the gradient by 3% up to a total of 12 minutes and 15%. If you can keep up you'll have a VO<sub>2</sub> of at least 42 and pass the test.

### LADDER CLIMB

Afraid of heights? Wearing full firefighter gear weighing 20kg, ascend a 13.5m-high ladder (approximately second-storey height) and lean back, holding the ladder, with arms outstretched.

### CASUALTY EVACUATION

A test of upper- and lower-body strength. Drag a 55kg 'casualty' walking backwards around a 30m course.

### LADDER LIFT

This tests functional fitness. Raise a 20kg bar set on a support 75cm off the ground up to a height of 182cm and back to the support.

### EQUIPMENT CARRY

Pick up and carry a simulated 'Light Portable Pump' weighing 30kg for 100m.



## SAVE YOUR HEART

Recently 555 posted these heart-reinforcing workouts, one entry-level and one more advanced

### FOR THE EVERYMAN

Simple but effective high-intensity drills AMRAP in 12 minutes of

- 12 goblet squats
- 16 goblet lunges
- 20 press-ups

Do as many rounds of these exercises as possible in 12 minutes.

### FOR MEN OF HONOUR

Advanced workouts, this one in memory of fireman Daniel Brethel who died on 9/11

Do 24-18-12-6 reps of

- Burpee box jumps
  - Sit-ups with 9kg med ball
- Alternate each exercise for the prescribed number of reps as fast as possible.

makes sense but I don't want to put people off if they don't like CrossFit. If you like to run, go run. If you like to ride a bike, do that. We're just trying to get these guys in shape to help them live longer hopefully.'

In the US it's spread like, well, like wildfire. 'We're hearing that people around the world are building gyms in their firehouses and encouraging those who don't exercise much to work out,' says Piparo. In the UK it's

caught on too - Jamie Keane of Birmingham Fire Service thanked Piparo and the 555 team for helping his crew do their job better. 'The high-intensity strength workouts 555 provided have dramatically improved my conditioning and grip strength, both essential as part of a high level of fitness required to be a firefighter,' Keane says.

Fitness is given more attention in UK fire departments. 'UK fire crews are tested annually and get regular medicals to test lung function and hearing,' says Liam Noll, health and wellbeing coach at the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service. If they fail a test - such as the dreaded bleep test or the Chester Treadmill Test (see the box on p121), which requires a  $VO_2$  max of at least 42 to pass - they are put on review and retested between three weeks and six months later. Fitness programmes are available if requested, and departments provide an allotted 40 minutes to train per 24-hour shift, but these aren't obligatory - making 555's work all the more valuable.

### THE TEST

To join the 555 Fitness movement I simply start following it on Instagram, where it has 12,000 followers (30,000 on Facebook). The beginner workouts predominantly involve bodyweight moves that you can do anywhere - at home, in a basic gym or even in a busy fire station. Over the course of a week I take on three varied sessions. First is a 15-minute AMRAP (as many rounds as possible) of six pull-ups, ten box jumps and 14 hollow rocks that makes my pulse leap above 150bpm for a healthy dose of fat burning and cardio training. Next is a partner workout, where my girlfriend and I take it in turns to do press-ups and planks and then air squats



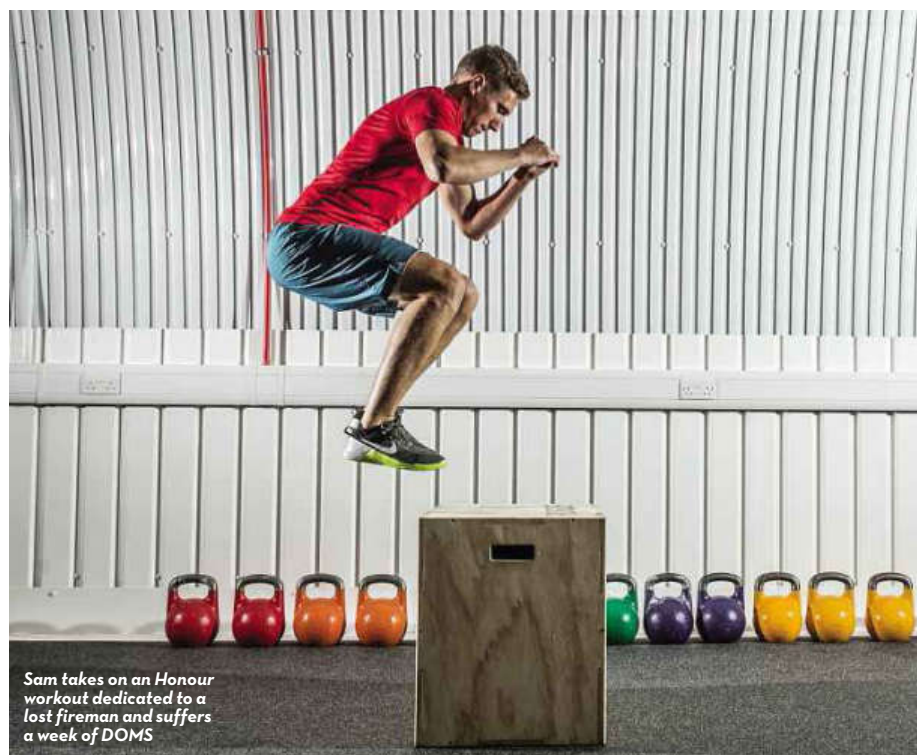
and wall sits - we do this on holiday in our hotel room, proving the versatility of 555's plan. 'I love partner workouts,' says Piparo. 'They're great for building teamwork.'

The last is an EMOM (every minute on the minute) challenge of dumbbell thrusters and pull-ups, increasing by one rep every minute. It sounds easy but I'm gasping after just five minutes - making me wonder how some of the 555 followers pictured on their Instagram page can possibly do these workouts in full firefighter regalia, loaded down by the 20kg kit and in some cases even restricting their oxygen intake using an elevation training mask ([trainingmask.co.uk](http://trainingmask.co.uk)).

All the workouts are scalable depending on your ability so although the moves are simple, they will severely test an experienced trainer's fitness if they're willing to push themselves hard enough. And they can be easily squeezed into a lunch hour or done at home. 'The bodyweight workouts are meant to be quick and easy to do with no equipment,' says Piparo. 'I do pull-ups off the buckets of my ladder truck and instead of battle ropes we use hoses that are out of service. We're inspired by what's around us.'

As well as sets and reps to follow, 555 provide motivation. The more advanced workouts they post are challenging 'Honour' workouts, each of which commemorates one of the 343 firefighters who died in the line of duty on 11th September 2001 (see the box, top-left).

One I take on midway through the month, in memory of Thomas Butler of Squad 1, cycles 60kg hang cleans and 9kg medicine ball wall squats for 15-12-9-6-3 reps. 'The idea is that every rep is for that person who lost their life,' says Piparo, and it provides a worthy challenge for the more experienced



Sam takes on an Honour workout dedicated to a lost fireman and suffers a week of DOMS





The 555 Fitness team mix up the moves daily to keep participants like Sam on their toes



trainer. However, the more demanding and technical lifts can elevate risk of injury. This workout leaves me with week-long DOMS in my lats, suggesting I could have done with a trainer to correct my form.

### THE VERDICT

For all the good work 555 Fitness is doing, an awareness of the dangers posed by poor cardiovascular fitness is still the biggest fight. 'Last year the leading killer was still cardiac-related disease,' says Piparo. 'But a lot of firefighters are sending us messages thanking us for what we're doing. They tell us they've been following our programmes and lost weight, or they've put 40lb [18kg] on their back squat, or they were able to make a rescue they wouldn't have been able to make before because they were out of shape.'

555 has also partnered with a blog called Fork and Hose (forkandhoseco.com), which provides recipes for firefighters and educates people about improving heart health through nutrition. 'This career is very

stressful and it's easy to fall into comfort eating,' says Piparo, whose typical shift is 24 hours on, 72 hours off for a total of eight days a month. 'But the culture is changing. When I started 12 years ago there would be vats of oil above the stoves because guys were deep-fat frying everything. Now we've got guys cooking up protein pancakes and plantain hash browns for breakfast.'

As for Fireman Sam, after a month of short, varied and occasionally brutal workouts, I feel in the best shape I've been in for a long time. I'm less inclined to skip a workout because they're over so quickly. Having a proper routine to follow gives my training structure. And 555 has recently added downloadable strength and fat loss plans for those with specific targets. Living the hazardous life of a firefighter might not be for everyone, but training like one and enjoying the heart-saving benefits it can provide certainly is.

**For more information visit [555fitness.com](http://555fitness.com) and follow @555fitness on Instagram**

### THE BREAKDOWN

No membership required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
For all fitness levels	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Lose fat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Build muscle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Boost endurance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Technique advice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Takes under 30 minutes?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Suitable for both sexes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Replicable at home	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Available nationwide	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**SCORE 9/10**



Rob Diparo



# A STRONGER CORE IN 5 MOVES

*Forget the cable machines - for a full-body workout that hits your muscles from every angle, all you need is a towel*

**Y**es, there's probably an infomercial-branded device somewhere that lets you do the workout shown on these pages for three easy payments of £79.99. No, you don't need it. 'A towel is all you need for a full-body workout that challenges your

body from angles it isn't used to,' says strength and conditioning coach Chris Burgess, who created this plan. 'It'll let you move through unusual ranges of motion with little impact, increasing your core stability and body control.' Bonus: you'll probably end up with a cleaner floor too.

## HOW TO DO THIS WORKOUT

Do this plan as a circuit twice a week, performing the recommended reps for each exercise and moving straight to the next one without rest. Rest for a minute at the end of the circuit and repeat a total of three times. Up the reps if you can.



1

## SLIDING PIKE

REPS 6

This is a core-tester and party trick in one. Start in a press-up position with your feet on the towel. Then, keeping your legs straight, bring your feet towards your hands, raising your hips into the air.



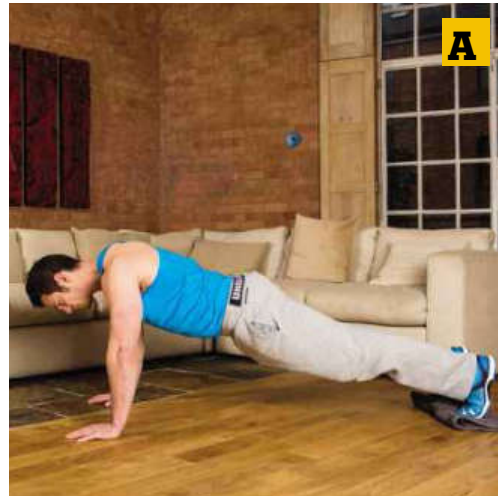


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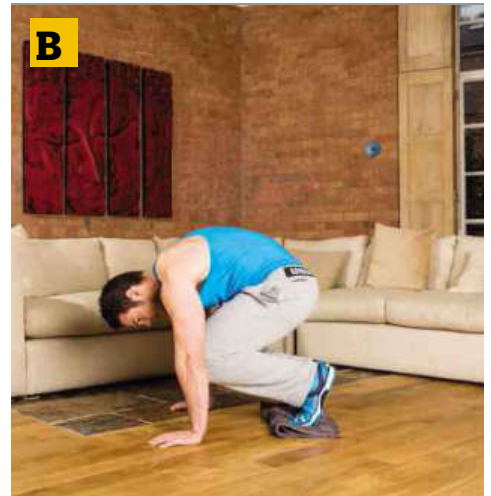
## SLIDING SQUAT THRUST

REPS 12

Start in a press-up position with both feet on the towel, then crunch your knees in towards your chest. Pause and push them back out. Focus on control, not speed.



A



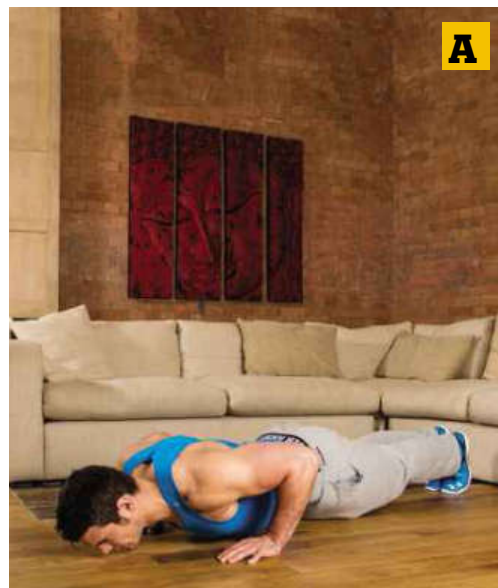
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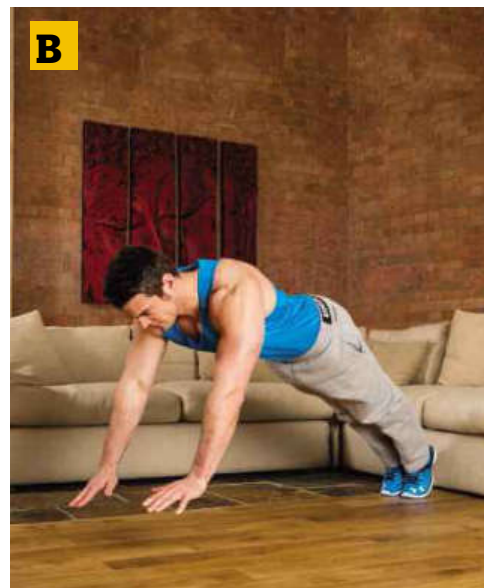
## EXPLOSIVE PRESS-UP

REPS 6

Prime your muscles with an explosive movement and they'll be charged up for what's to come. Drop into the bottom of a press-up then explode up, taking your hands off the floor. Add a clap if you want, but it's not absolutely necessary.



A



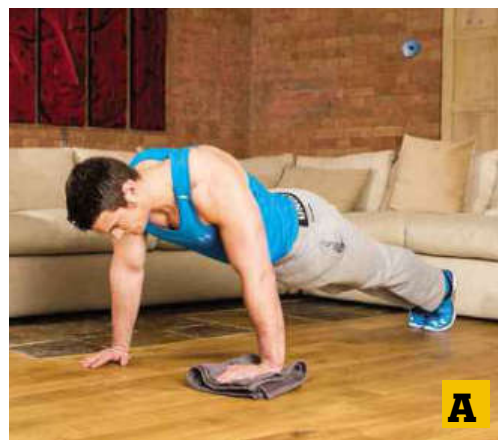
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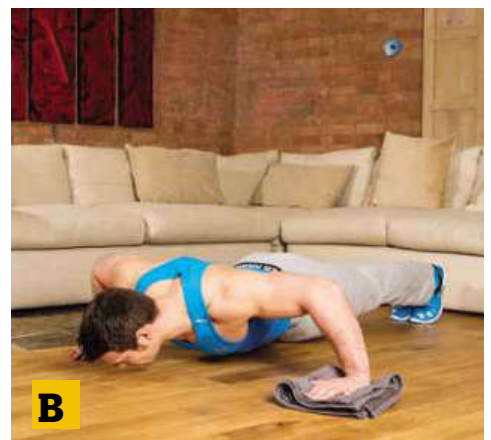
## ARCHER PRESS-UP

REPS 3 EACH SIDE

Start with one hand on the towel at the top of a press-up position. As you lower yourself towards the floor, slide your towel-hand out - keeping your forearm vertical - so that most of your weight is on your bent arm. Finish your reps on one side, then switch to the other.



A



B

5

## BODYSAW

REPS 12

Think of this as a super-plank. With your feet on the towel and your forearms propped on the floor, slide yourself backwards as far as is comfortable, then use your arms and core strength to pull yourself back in. Pause, repeat and wince.

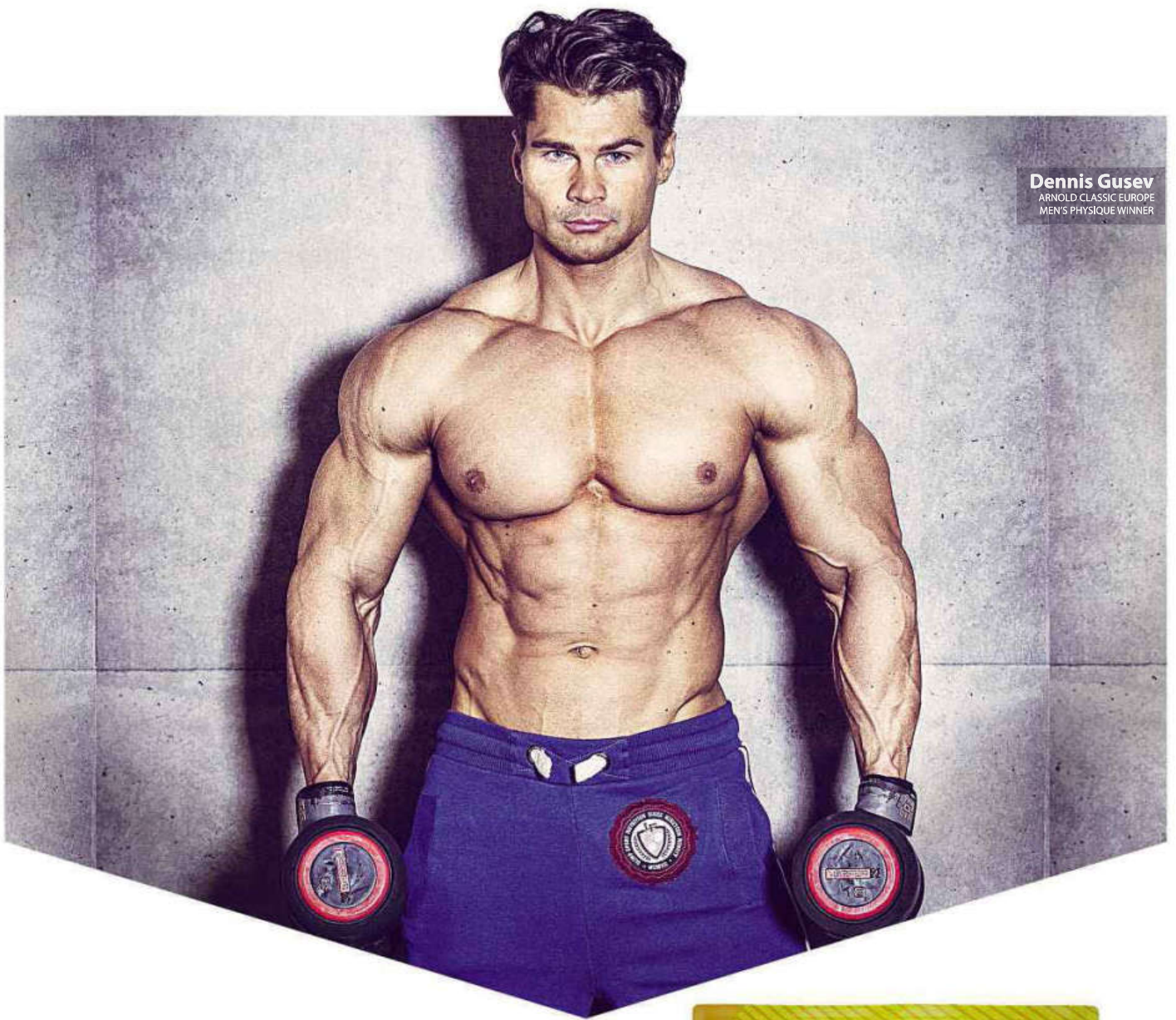


A



B





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ARNOLD CLASSIC EUROPE  
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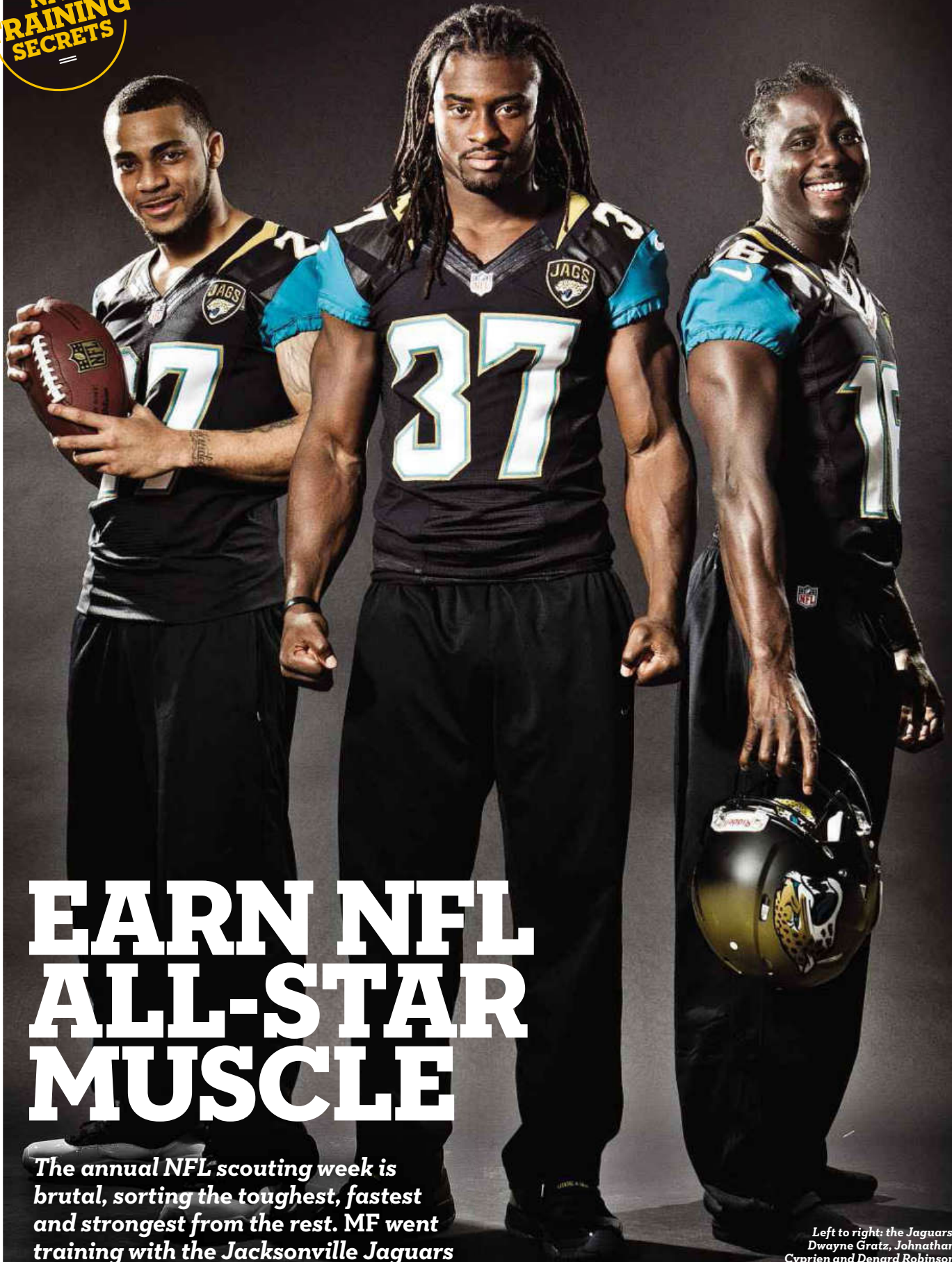
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NFL  
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SECRETS

# EARN NFL ALL-STAR MUSCLE

*The annual NFL scouting week is brutal, sorting the toughest, fastest and strongest from the rest. MF went training with the Jacksonville Jaguars to find out how to make the grade*

*Left to right: the Jaguars' Dwayne Gratz, Johnathan Cyprien and Denard Robinson*



Words: Sam Rider, Karishma Patel | Photography: Ben Knight, Rick Wilson



**I**n no sport are size, speed and strength more heavily scrutinised than in the macho world of American football. Every February the very best college athletes are invited to the National Football League's week-long scouting combine – a much-hyped week of televised physical assessments – with the aim of out-sprinting, out-jumping and out-muscling the competition. Successful players stand to inflate their reputations and, as a result, their salaries and career prospects with every extra bench press rep counted or metre per second clocked.

With so much at stake, training for the combine is a serious business. Players spend exhausting hours honing their acceleration, top speed, full-body power, strength endurance and agility. And for the athletes who rank highest in each discipline, the welcome by-product is a lean, muscular physique and a mental resolve that enables them to reach the top level. But can their methods – some of which seem like madness – do anything for you?

## TOP SPEED

'The combine measures strength, endurance, power, agility and even mental toughness,' says Johnathan Cyprien of the Jacksonville Jaguars, the NFL franchise that's contracted to play one match at Wembley each season from

2013 to 2016. Two years ago Cyprien excelled in the vertical jump at the combine (see the box, opposite) with a top-performing leap of 97.8cm. 'It's a test and you have to prepare for it. But for me, I had to work hardest on my speed.'

To ace his test the Florida International University graduate went to extra measures. 'I use a weighted compression top from Titin,' says the 25-year-old, whose job as strong safety is to disrupt opposition offensive plays, intercept passes and, if the situation allows, sack the opposition quarterback, which he accomplished in his rookie season. 'That adds about 8lb [3.6kg] of weight and I wear it when sprinting and jumping. My muscles had to adapt to shift the extra weight, so when I took the weights off I was able to move that much faster.'

At his home – a pigskin's throw from Miami Beach – Cyprien worked on developing quick feet and good sprinting mechanics on sand. 'Sprinting on sand helps you work on the turnover of your feet. It forces you to get your feet up and down quickly so you have minimal contact with the ground.' His typical sprint sessions include explosive efforts over 10-15m

for acceleration, longer gallops over 20-40m for top-end speed and running against resistance. 'I love sprints wearing a parachute or dragging a sled,' he says. 'I do three sets of five for each distance, slowly walking back to the start after each rep and resting for three minutes between sets so I can give my full effort each time.'

This balance of high-intensity work and ample rest is an approach advocated by Tom Myslinski, head of strength and conditioning at the Jaguars. 'For every 10m we sprint in training, we rest for a full minute,' says Myslinski. 'The point is to be fully recovered because we're trying to exert maximum effort. In a session we might only cover 150-250m of sprint work, but every metre is flat out.'

To ensure that every muscle and sinew is straining in equal measure, players' strengths are monitored and their training tailored to keep their bodies balanced. 'Anybody who is very anterior-dominant, like our offensive or defensive linemen who get through so much anterior work on the field, will do a lot of posterior work to create structural balance,' Myslinski explains. 'Squatting is an awesome exercise but for most people it's very quad-dominant so we prescribe plenty of lower-back, glute and hamstring work.'

Myslinski instructs his front-heavy athletes to target their posteriors with Romanian deadlifts and single-leg hip thrusts, doing three sets of six reps and focusing on slowing down

the eccentric (lowering) part of the lift to protect against hamstring strains.

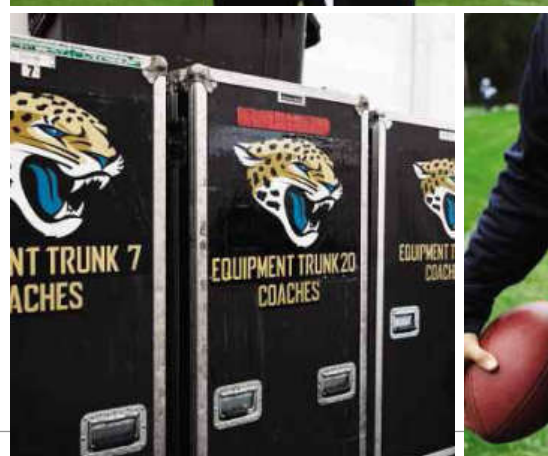
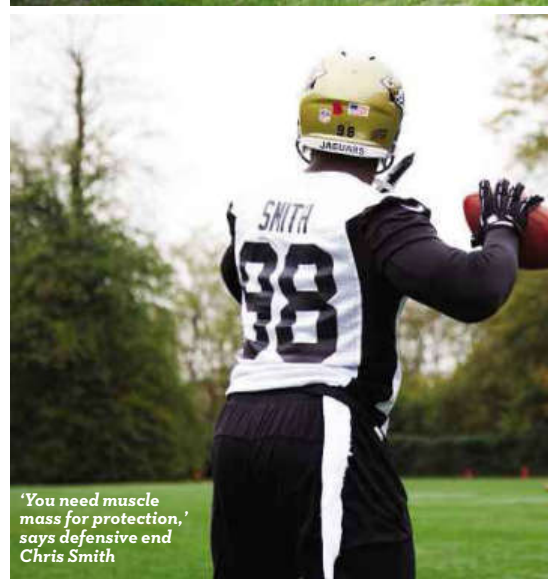
## BRUTE STRENGTH

Any NFL all-star will have been raised on a diet of bench pressing, but the combine tests a competitor's strength endurance rather than their one-rep max. 'With adrenaline flowing on game day, you're always able to push harder than you can in training,' says Cyprien, who pressed the 102.5kg bar (4.5kg more than his own bodyweight) 18 times.

'To train for this I did a lot of light reps to learn the movement and become as efficient at it as possible,' he says. 'It's important to train complementary muscles too, especially the muscles in your back.' To boost his bench, Cyprien would do high reps with a light weight, then go straight into bent-over rows or Pendlay rows, where you row the bar up from the floor – focusing on concentric strength – and resist the weight as much as you can as you lower it back down.

The complementary exercises don't end there. Building all-over muscle is as much a priority as speed and strength, whether

**'WITH ADRENALINE FLOWING ON GAME DAY, YOU CAN PUSH HARDER THAN IN TRAINING'**







# TAKE THE TEST



How would you rank against the best in the NFL combine business?

## 40-YARD DASH

**What it tests** Acceleration and speed

**What it is** The main event. Athletes sprint from a standing start, aiming to produce as much explosive power and speed as possible. They're timed at 10-, 20- and 40-yard [36.6m] intervals.

**2015 top performer** JJ Nelson, wide receiver (4.28sec)

**All-time top performer** Chris Johnson, running back 2008 (4.24sec)

## BENCH PRESS

**What it tests** Strength endurance

**What it is** Rack 225lb [102kg] on the flat bench press and crank out as many reps as (super) humanly possible before you have to dump the bar.

**2015 top performer** Ereck Flowers, offensive tackle (37 reps)

**All-time top performer** Stephen Paea, defensive end 2011 (49 reps)

## VERTICAL JUMP

**What it tests** Lower-body explosive power

**What it is** How high can you jump? To avoid favouring the giants, this is the difference between the athlete's standing reach and his max jump reach.

**2015 top performer** Chris Conley, wide receiver (45 inches) [1.14m]

**All-time top performer** Chris Conley, 2015

## BROAD JUMP

**What it tests** Leg strength and balance

**What it is** Think long jump without the run-up or sandpit. From a standing start, bound forwards and land with precision. Stumble forwards and you've blown it.

**2015 top performer** Byron Jones, cornerback (12ft 3in) [3.73m]

**All-time top performer** Byron Jones, 2015

## 3-CONE DRILL

**What it tests** Agility and co-ordination

**What it is** Deceleration and coordination are as essential as top speed. Athletes sprint round an L-shaped course marked with cones, rapidly changing direction.

**2015 top performer** Justin Coleman, cornerback (6.61sec)

**All-time top performer** Jeffrey Maehl, wide receiver 2011 (6.42sec)

## 20-YARD SHUTTLE RUN

**What it tests** Agility and lateral speed

**What it is** Also known as the 5-10-5. The athlete runs five yards [4.6m] to the right, touches a line, runs 10 yards to the left and runs back five yards to the start. Simple.

**2015 top performer** Bobby McCain, cornerback (3.82sec)

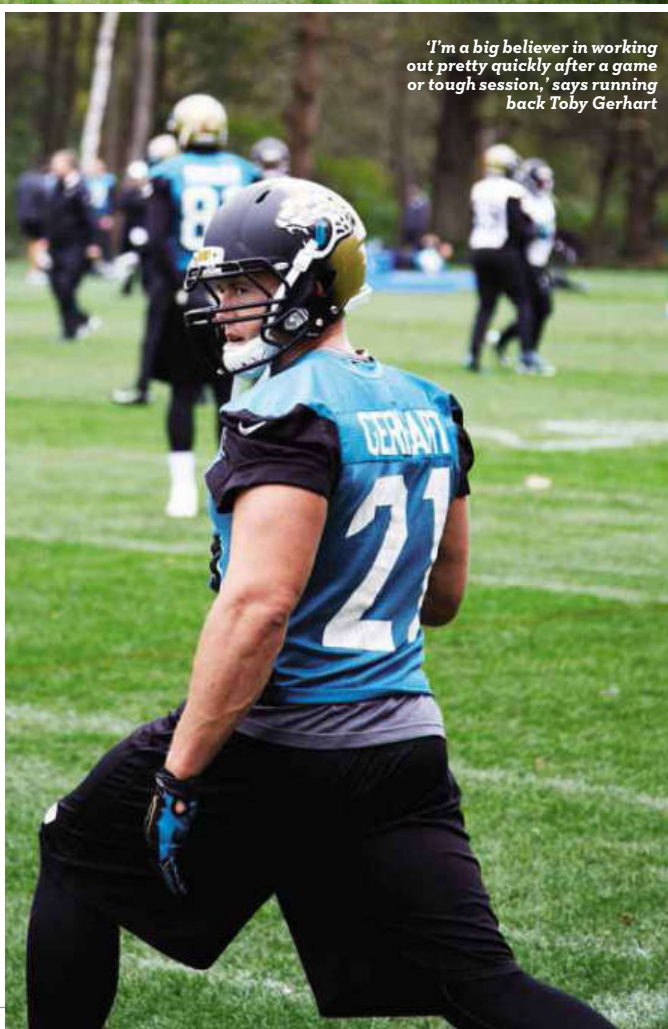
**All-time top performer** Jason Allen, cornerback 2006 (3.81sec)



The Jaguars train at their UK base, the Grove in Hertfordshire



'I'm a big believer in working out pretty quickly after a game or tough session,' says running back Toby Gerhart





you're a wardrobe-shaped guard grappling on the line of scrimmage or a gazelle-like wide receiver plucking the ball out of the air while bracing for imminent contact. 'Working on your upper body helps you look good in your jersey,' says defensive end Chris Smith. 'But football is a very physical sport. You need the muscle mass for protection.'

The Jaguars use powerlifting exercises to develop full-body strength, with slight tweaks to minimise injury risk and ensure players maintain maximum strength throughout the season. 'The players will squat and deadlift as well as bench,' says Myslinski. 'But they often use a trap bar deadlift that puts less strain on their lower backs and they also do Bulgarian split squats to work on lateral, single-leg strength and to correct imbalances. You've got to be careful, though, because too much unilateral training can actually increase your bilateral deficits.'

## EXPLOSIVE POWER

For Cyprien's favourite combine event, the vertical jump, learning to use every muscle in lightning-fast synchronicity is key. 'Technique is crucial,' he says. 'But you can teach your muscles to work faster. I use speed squats, where you lower down as fast as possible, pause, then come up as fast as possible. These help you generate explosive power from a standing start to get high off the floor. I also use bands wrapped around the bar or around my shoulders and do jump squats, working against the resistance. It tests all the little muscles that need to work to help you go that bit higher.'

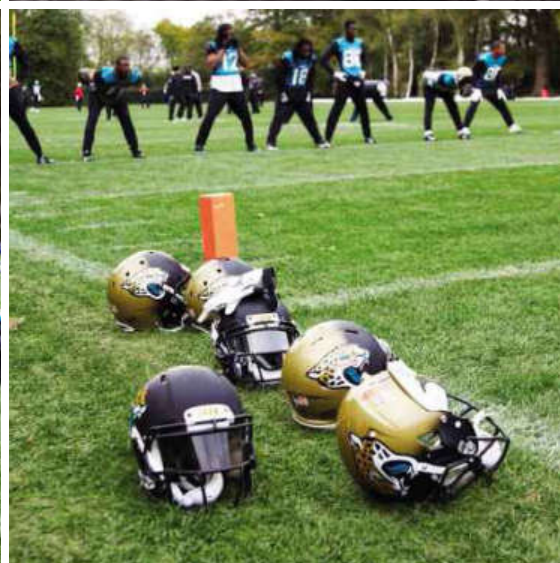
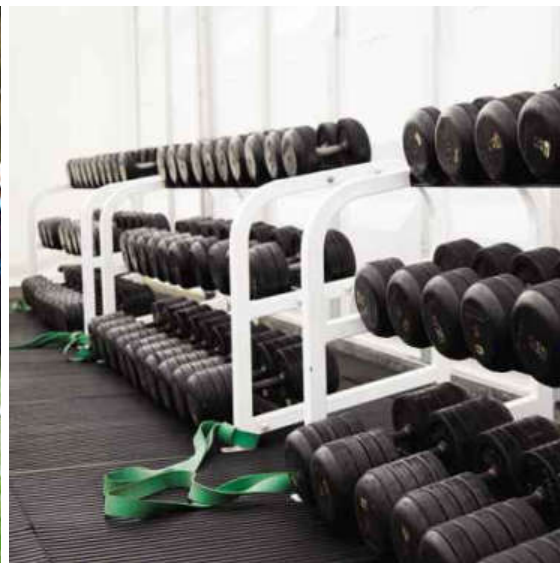
To translate vertical propulsion into functional power on the field the Jaguars enjoy a healthy dose of medicine ball training. 'We do lots of rotational work with medicine balls,' says Myslinski. 'Rotational work should only be added after you've got a very stable core, so first I make sure they're strong and stable with planks and side planks.'

Once he's assured of his players' core foundations, Myslinski prescribes a med ball circuit of two-handed rotational throws, one-arm shot-put throws, slams and chest press throws, all against a wall or the floor so they can catch it and repeat. 'We get them to work as hard and fast as they can for eight seconds - because plays in football don't really last much longer than that - then rest 30 seconds between moves for three sets. They do that three times a week.'

The NFL pre-season runs for six weeks,



Contact sessions, weights work and dynamic warm-up drills all contribute to the Jaguars' elite fitness



## 'IN THE VERTICAL JUMP, TECHNIQUE IS CRUCIAL - BUT YOU CAN TEACH YOUR MUSCLES TO WORK FASTER'

from late July to mid-September, before the 16-game regular season punts off, culminating in the January play-offs and the Super Bowl bonanza in February. To juggle the high demands of training and competing, and to peak for the start of the season, the Jaguars alternate between high- and low-intensity days. 'We use a split routine to facilitate recovery,' says Myslinski. 'If one day is intensive sprinting, plyometrics, Olympic lifting or med ball drills, the next will be low-impact conditioning work.' As with the long rest periods between sets when training for power, it's important to have a good rest between workouts to let your central nervous system recharge.

## INVALUABLE RECOVERY

The NFL, which is entering its 50th season of the modern era (since its merger with the

American Football League, when Super Bowls began), is a multibillion-dollar enterprise: a mere 30-second ad spot during the 2015 Super Bowl cost a staggering \$4.5m [£2.9m] - and no

expense is spared to keep athletes in peak condition. Smith swears by a leg-massaging contraption called NormaTec Recovery that wouldn't look out of place on James Caan post-ankle dislocation in the film *Misery*.

NormaTec is a piece of kit resembling large, rigid trousers that a recuperating footballer will slip on to speed up the recovery process after a brutal workout or match. The device uses sequential pulse technology that mimics the natural muscle pump of the legs to flush fluid and metabolites towards your organs where they can be processed and evacuated - like squeezing toothpaste out of the tube.

'It brings your legs back before the next game,' says Smith, who also uses an innovative type of 'ice boot' to refresh his limbs after a workout instead of dunking his whole body in an ice bath.



The Jaguars aim to be better prepared at Wembley this year, having lost to the Cowboys in 2014



'Recovery is by far the most important thing about working out,' he says. 'It's the one thing you've just got to do.'

If futuristic tech is out of your price bracket, a low-cost tonic for all this tough training is, surprisingly, more training. 'I'm a big believer in getting the weight on my back and working out pretty quickly after a game or tough session,' says running back Toby Gerhart. 'A lot of guys don't like to do legs and they put off training an extra couple of days, but I think it helps me get the soreness out and gets me ready for the next game.'

For all the gadgets and protocols the Jaguars recruit, one of their primary concerns this season should be overcoming

jet lag. In October they 'host' the Buffalo Bills in the third of their four annual matches at Wembley, where in the past two seasons they've suffered defeats of 42-10 to the San Francisco 49ers and 31-17 to the Dallas Cowboys. Having drafted some promising young players in 2015, and with a rejuvenated Cyprien determined to return to the form that made him a star rookie, the Jags will hope they can make it third time lucky this season. **LF**

**The Jacksonville Jaguars host the Buffalo Bills at Wembley on Sunday 25th October. For more info and to sign up to the free Union Jax fan club visit [jaguars.com/uk](http://jaguars.com/uk)**



## COMBINE KIT

Use the Jaguars' secret weapons to build NFL force



### FOR STRENGTH

#### **Bodymax Power Bands**

£8.50-£65, [powerhouse-fitness.co.uk](http://powerhouse-fitness.co.uk)  
Ranging from 15mm to 100mm, these durable bands help you smash through PBs. Perfect for bench pressing and squats, as well as bodyweight bent-over rows and pull-aparts, they work your muscles harder the more you stretch them.



### FOR POWER

#### **Titin Weighted Compression Shirt**

£160, [titintech.com](http://titintech.com)  
Looks like Batman's cold-weather gear, feels like a snug compression top, works like a weighted vest. Fill the 14-pocket shirt with up to 4kg of gel inserts when sprinting and doing explosive bodyweight circuits to build functional power.



### FOR SPEED

#### **Blitz Running Parachute**

£20, [blitzsport.com](http://blitzsport.com)  
Sprint against drag factor to develop lightning acceleration from your first stride. Suitable for distances from 10m to 200m, this nylon chute has a padded waist for even resistance. Go short for increased muscle or longer for a fat-melting bonus.





# Get obstacle-race fit

Take on any challenge – from Tough Mudder to a DIY course in a local park

## THE COACH

After a distinguished career in the Royal Marines, where he spent seven years as an officer and two as a troop commander, Brian Adcock has completed the Atacama Desert Crossing and the Bob Graham Round fell running challenge (42 Lakeland peaks in 24 hours). In association with the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund he has created the Commando Series obstacle race, which takes place in November at Hever Castle, Kent ([commandoseries.co.uk](http://commandoseries.co.uk)).



## THE GOAL

'Obstacle course races are a great way to stay fit, but failing to prepare properly can make them a lot less fun and more painful,' says Adcock. 'These exercises simulate the common obstacles you'll encounter in an OCR and prepare the muscle groups and energy systems you'll need to use. They focus on full-body functional movements and grip strength. Interspersing the moves with periods of high-intensity cardio and short rests will prepare you for the stop-start nature of a race.'

## THE WORKOUT

'Ideally you'd do this with a partner to encourage you to work together as you'll need to do in an obstacle course race,' says Adcock. 'If you do, take turns doing each exercise so that while one of you works, the other rests. If you train solo, rest after each set for as long as it took you to complete it. After each exercise do a one-minute intense blast of cardio – treadmill, bike or rowing machine – to work your respiratory system as well as your muscular endurance. Aim to do this workout three times a week.'



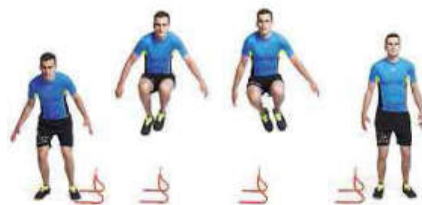
### 1 FOR WALL CLIMBS... BURPEE PULL-UP

Get into a press-up position under a pull-up bar. Jump your legs forward, then jump up and grasp the bar with hands shoulder-width apart. Pull up until your chest is above the bar to simulate the power you need to get over 3m-high walls. Lower, drop into a crouch, then kick your legs out to return to the start. Alternate between underhand and overhand grips to work your biceps and your upper back.

BEGINNER SETS 3 REPS 3

INTERMEDIATE SETS 3 REPS 5

ADVANCED SETS 3 REPS 8



### 3 FOR OFF-ROAD SCRAMBLING... LATERAL JUMP

Stand side-on to a low hurdle or step. Hop laterally with both feet over the hurdle, then spring back to the start. Focus on keeping ground contact as brief as possible with each rep. This exercise develops the strong calves and ankles you'll need to cope with uneven terrain.

BEGINNER SETS 3 REPS 15

INTERMEDIATE SETS 3 REPS 20

ADVANCED SETS 3 REPS 25



### 5 FOR COMMANDO CRAWLS... BEAR CRAWL

Get on all fours, keeping your back straight and hips high. Keeping your core tight, move one arm and the opposite leg forward at the same time, then repeat on the other side. Progress to crawling on your hands and knees and then to commando crawls, on your knees and elbows with your hips low to the floor.

BEGINNER SETS 3 DISTANCE 15M

INTERMEDIATE SETS 3 DISTANCE 20M

ADVANCED SETS 3 DISTANCE 25M



### 2 FOR MONKEY BARS... TRICEPS DIP

Grip a set of parallel bars with arms straight, your weight slightly forward and your legs together. Lower your body until your elbows are at right angles, then push back up. When tackling the monkey bars, you should ideally swing like Tarzan rather than with your arms bent, and this move builds the triceps strength required for this.

BEGINNER SETS 3 REPS 8

INTERMEDIATE SETS 3 REPS 10

ADVANCED SETS 3 REPS 12



### 4 FOR LOG CARRIES... RACK KETTLEBELL WALKING LUNGE

Hold a heavy kettlebell at the top of your chest (the rack position). Using your core to keep your torso upright, lunge forward on one leg, then continue, alternating legs to walk forward. Turn around, switch the kettlebell to the other side and lunge back to the start.

BEGINNER SETS 3 REPS 8 EACH SIDE

INTERMEDIATE SETS 3 REPS 10 EACH SIDE

ADVANCED SETS 3 REPS 12 EACH SIDE



### 6 FOR ROPE CLIMBS... FARMER'S WALK

Stand holding the heaviest dumbbells or kettlebells you can manage by your sides. Then walk, keeping your core strong and your chest up, and focus on gripping hard even when your body is exhausted. This grip-strengthening full-body move is essential for almost every obstacle in any race.

BEGINNER SETS 3 DISTANCE 15M

INTERMEDIATE SETS 3 DISTANCE 20M

ADVANCED SETS 3 DISTANCE 25M

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# INJURY-FREE FOOTBALL

*Stay off the dreaded stretcher and keep your lower limbs strong and powerful with our expert's advice*



Mike Aunger runs Technique Physiotherapy and Sports Medicine ([techniquephysio.com](http://techniquephysio.com)) and has worked for the Chelsea FC academy, as well as elite athletes in football, rugby, skiing and bobsleigh.

Football is easily the UK's favourite sport, with over 40,000 registered clubs in England alone - the most in the world, and far ahead of second-placed Brazil's 29,000. That's a lot of players and a hell of a lot of sprains, twists and days spent holding frozen peas to injuries. Take these precautions and avoid hobbling off the pitch in the first half.

## 1 KNEE LIGAMENT TEAR

'Anterior and medial cruciate ligament tears are often caused by twisting movements,' says Aunger. 'Poor landing mechanics and muscle imbalances between the quads and hamstrings are frequently responsible.'

### PREVENT IT

'Build balanced strength in your hamstrings and quads with Nordic curls. Kneel with a partner holding your heels still and use your hams to resist gravity as you fall forwards. Stop your fall with your hands. Do three sets of six, building to 12 as you get stronger. Lateral hops before a game also wake up your muscles to protect your knees. Hop over a line, aiming for 80 in a minute on each leg.'

## 2 QUADRICEPS STRAIN

'Your quads are the primary muscles used to kick a ball, which means they're susceptible to overuse injuries. Tightness in your leg muscles and weakness in your quads can increase the risk.'

### PREVENT IT

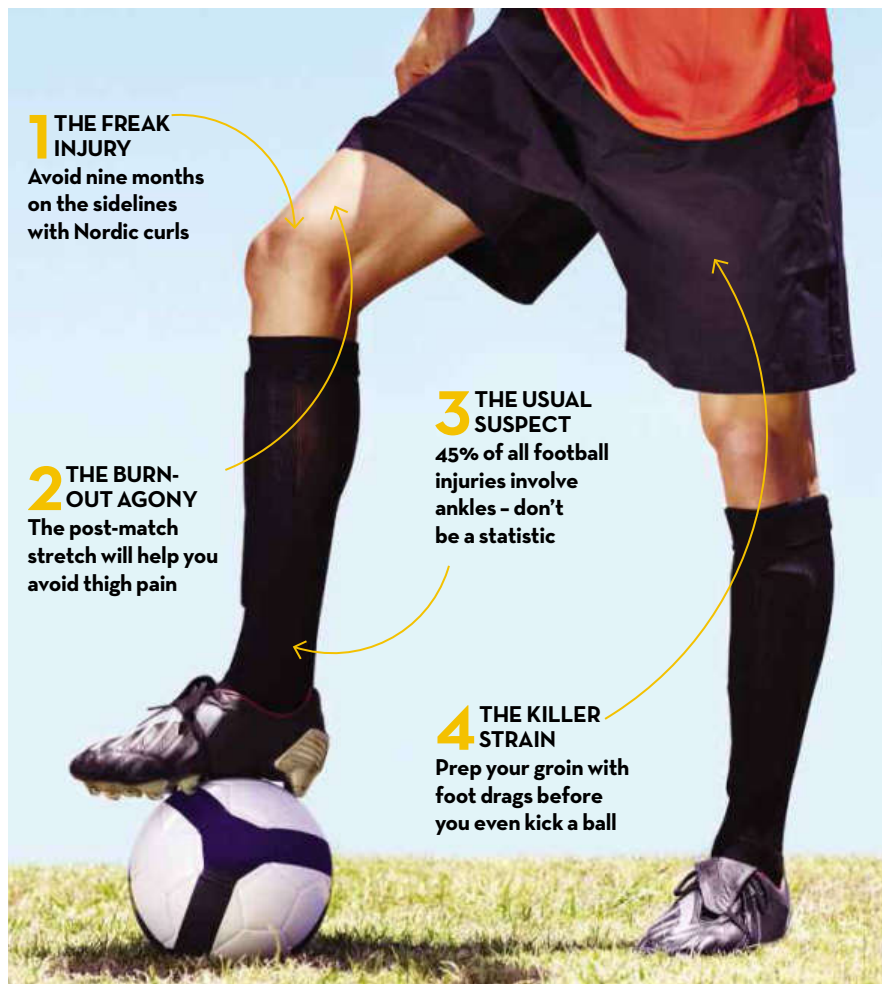
'Dynamic stretches before a game mobilise your quads and hip flexors. With arms overhead, lunge forwards and backwards for three sets of 12 reps on each side. After a game, stretch your quads. Stand on one leg with the laces of your other foot behind you on a chair. Bend your front leg to lower your back knee to the floor so you feel a stretch in your back quad. Hold for 90 seconds.'

## 3 ANKLE SPRAIN

'Lateral ankle sprains and ligament tears can be caused by a tackle, a mishit shot or by landing awkwardly, but most are the result of a previous injury that leaves you with instability in the joint.'

### PREVENT IT

'Improve your proprioception (your subconscious body awareness) to help you land safely by doing single-leg toe taps. Stand on the soft side of a



### 1 THE FREAK INJURY

Avoid nine months on the sidelines with Nordic curls

### 2 THE BURN-OUT AGONY

The post-match stretch will help you avoid thigh pain

### 3 THE USUAL SUSPECT

45% of all football injuries involve ankles - don't be a statistic

### 4 THE KILLER STRAIN

Prep your groin with foot drags before you even kick a ball

## ONE-KIT FIX



### PB MINI BAND SET

£10.80 [performbetter.co.uk](http://performbetter.co.uk)

'Strengthening your glutes with sidestep squats improves knee and hip alignment and will help prevent injury,' says Aunger. 'Wrap the bands around your legs, just below your knees, and lower into a half squat. Keeping low, step to each side, working against the resistance. Do four sets of ten reps on each side.'

Bosu ball with your leg slightly bent and tap the toes of your other foot on the floor forwards, back and to the sides, using your ankle stabilisers to balance. Do three sets of three rounds on each leg - and start again if you lose your balance.'

## 4 GROIN STRAIN

'Rapid changes in pace and striking the ball can stress the pubic region, resulting in acetabular labrum injuries or pubic symphysis overload - typically you'll feel a sharp pain.'

### PREVENT IT

'Warm up your groin by replicating the movements you'll use in a match, working up to 75% of maximum intensity. Include foot drags in this drill. Step sideways, then slide the inside of your foot across the floor so your groin works against the resistance. Do 15 reps on each side. To teach your glutes and hip complex to work together, do side planks. Once you can easily hold them for 40 seconds, add six single-leg lifts.'



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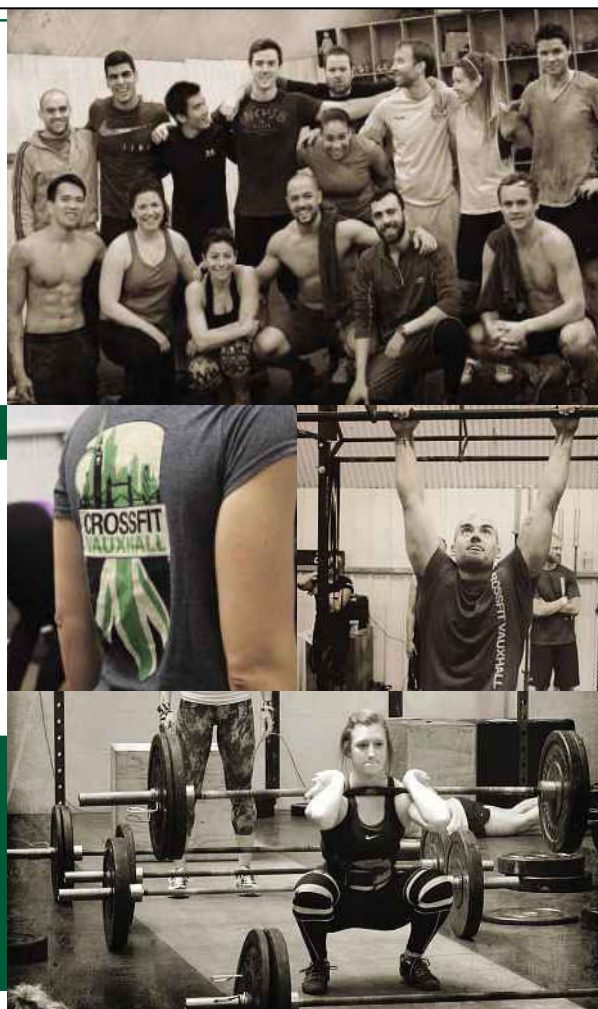
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# BODY TWO RIK

## BUILD BIG ARMS FAST

*Arm yourself with the essential plan to grow sleeve-busting biceps and triceps in four workouts*

**W**inning the arms race isn't as simple as hammering curls until your limbs turn to jelly, but it's not vastly more complicated. 'The key to growing any muscle is to make it stronger and make it work harder,' says Adam Gethin of Creating Physiques ([creatingphysiques.com](http://creatingphysiques.com)), the man behind this plan. Curls might give your arms a pump but they won't keep growing long term. Instead, a full-body workout with an emphasis on your biceps and triceps will make the difference.

'These workouts hit your body from every angle to maximise growth all over,' says

Gethin. 'They will stimulate the major anabolic hormones including testosterone, growth hormone and insulin-like growth factor 1 (IGF-1), which are vital for growth.'

The plan consists of four workouts. The push and pull days include a blend of full-body lifts and isolation exercises that will challenge your arms while keeping your body balanced. The lower-body day includes compound moves that will help flood your body with human growth hormone, and the final upper-body day will target those mirror muscles that every man (secretly or openly) wants to enhance.

### THIS MONTH'S TRAINER



**ADAM GETHIN**  
is founder  
of Creating

Physiques, a PT company specialising in body transformations. In 2014 he helped *MF's* Sam add 7kg of muscle in just ten weeks. For more info visit [y3tebook.co.uk](http://y3tebook.co.uk).

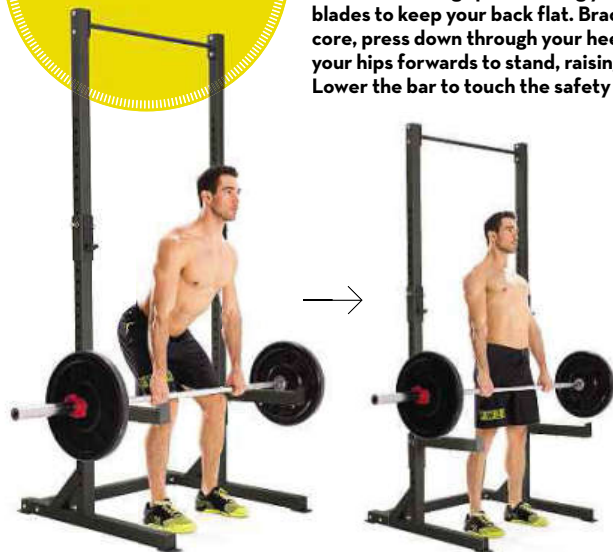


# BIG ARMS, NO WAITING

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## WORKOUT 1

### PULL



### 1// RACK PULL

SETS 4 REPS 6 REST 90SEC TEMPO 4010

Set the safety bars just above knee height on a squat rack. With the barbell resting on the bars, bend your knees and grasp it with a shoulder-width grip, retracting your shoulder blades to keep your back flat. Brace your core, press down through your heels and drive your hips forwards to stand, raising the bar. Lower the bar to touch the safety bars.



### 2// PULL-UP

SETS 4 REPS 10 REST 90SEC TEMPO 4010

Grasp a bar with an overhand grip so your palms are facing away from you and your hands are shoulder-width apart. Contract your upper back muscles to help pull your sternum towards the bar. Then lower under control.

### 3// UNDERHAND BENT-OVER ROW

SETS 4 REPS 10 REST 90SEC TEMPO 4010

Bend your knees slightly and hinge forward from the hips, keeping your back slightly concave and your shoulder blades back throughout. Holding the bar with an underhand grip just outside your legs, pull the weight up to your lower sternum, then lower slowly.



### 4// BARBELL BICEPS CURL

SETS 3 REPS 10 REST 90SEC TEMPO 4010

Hold a barbell with your hands shoulder-width apart and your palms facing forwards. Keeping your elbows close to your sides, and without leaning back, curl the bar up to your chest. Squeeze your biceps hard, then lower the bar.



### 5// ZOTTMAN CURL

SETS 3 REPS 12 REST 90SEC TEMPO 4010

Hold dumbbells by your sides, palms facing forwards. Curl them to your chest and rotate them so your palms still face forwards. Then lower slowly, rotating the weights at the bottom, and repeat.



### 6// INCLINE DUMBBELL BICEPS CURL

SETS 3 REPS 12 REST 90SEC TEMPO 4010

Lie on a bench set at a 45° angle holding a dumbbell in each hand with your arms straight down by your sides and your palms facing forwards. Curl the weights up to shoulder height. Squeeze your biceps hard, then lower the weights slowly.

**WORKOUT 2**

**PUSH**

**TEMPO EXPLAINED**

Tempo is expressed as a four-digit figure. The first digit indicates how long in seconds you should take to lower the weight (the larger this is, the better for increasing muscle size). The second indicates how long you should pause at the bottom, the third how long you should take to lift and the fourth how long you should pause at the top. An X means you should perform that phase of the move explosively.

**1// INCLINE BENCH PRESS**

SETS 4 REPS 6 REST  
90SEC TEMPO 4010

Lie on a bench set at a 45° angle, holding the bar with an overhand grip, hands just wider than shoulder-width apart. Drive your feet into the floor and press the bar straight overhead before lowering.



**2// INCLINE DUMBBELL PRESS**

SETS 3 REPS 10 REST 90SEC TEMPO 4010

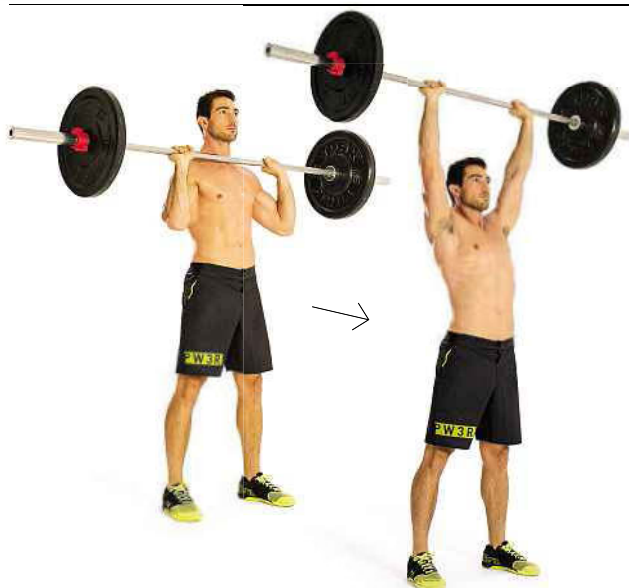
Lie on a bench set at a 45° angle, holding dumbbells beside your chest. Drive your feet into the floor and press the weights straight overhead, then lower slowly.



**3// RING DIP**

SETS 3 REPS 8 REST  
90SEC TEMPO 4010

Hold the rings with an overhand grip, arms extended and palms facing. Stay upright to recruit your triceps. Keeping your arms locked against your body, bend them and lower until your hands are level with your chest, then press back up powerfully.



**4// OVERHEAD PRESS**

SETS 3 REPS 10 REST 90SEC TEMPO 4010

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, holding the bar at the top of your chest with hands just wider than shoulder-width apart. Brace your core and glutes to keep your balance and press the bar overhead. Lower it back to the start.

**THE RAPID SOLUTION**

Can't commit to the full workout? Use these tricks of the hypertrophy trade with your regular training for muscle-enhancing effect

**TIME UNDER TENSION**

'The length of time a muscle is being worked is considerably more important than the number of reps you hit or kilograms you shift,' says Gethin. Focus on working the target muscle for a full 60 seconds with each set, reducing the weight if it forces you to quit too soon.

**TURN UP THE VOLUME**

'Increasing the volume - the amount of work your muscles are subjected to - encourages your arm muscles to grow to handle the high demand,' says Gethin. Increase the workload with drop sets. Once you hit failure with a weight, reduce it and repeat the exercise immediately.

**RANGE OF MOTION**

'This is especially important for growing your arms,' says Gethin. 'Whether you're doing curls or press-ups, tense your biceps and triceps at peak contraction - the top and bottom of the move - to work every fibre through the full length of the muscle.'

**ISOLATE TO ACCUMULATE**

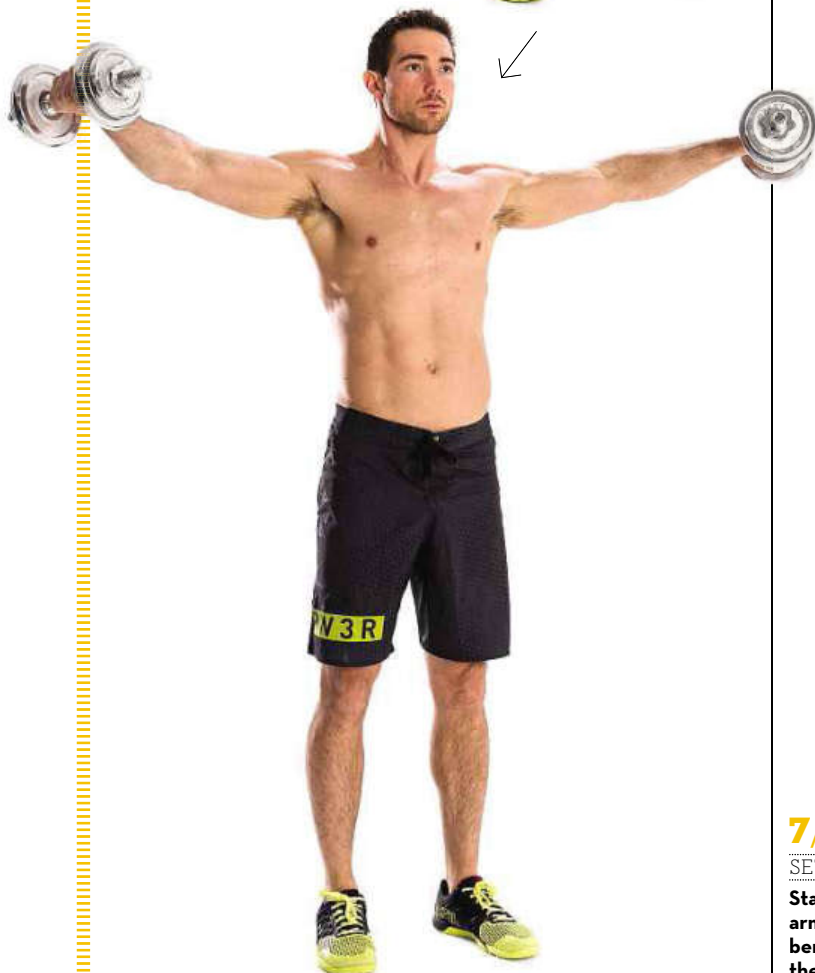
'The biggest mistake with arms exercises is to "cheat the move" by allowing other muscles to help,' says Gethin. 'When doing curls and triceps extensions, focus on keeping your shoulders and elbows locked in position so that only your arm muscles are doing the work.'



## 5// LATERAL RAISE

SETS 3 REPS 10 REST 90SEC TEMPO 4010

Hold a light dumbbell in each hand by your sides, palms facing each other. Keep a very slight bend in your arms as you slowly raise the dumbbells up and out in an arc until they're level with your shoulders. Then return them slowly to the start.



## 6// DIAMOND PRESS-UP

SETS 3 REPS 15 REST 90SEC TEMPO 4010

Perform a standard press-up but with the tips of your thumbs and forefingers touching to make a diamond shape. Lower your chest all the way until it touches your hands, then press back up until your arms are straight. This ensures a full range of motion to work your pecs and triceps.



## 7// DUMBBELL TRICEPS EXTENSION

SETS 3 REPS 10 REST 90SEC TEMPO 4010

Stand holding dumbbells above your head with your upper arms close to your ears. Keeping your upper arms static, bend at the elbows to lower the weights behind your head, then flex your triceps to raise the weights straight up.

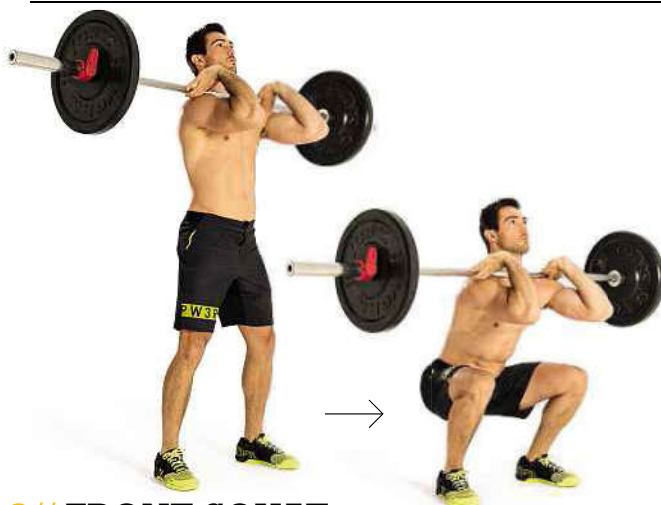
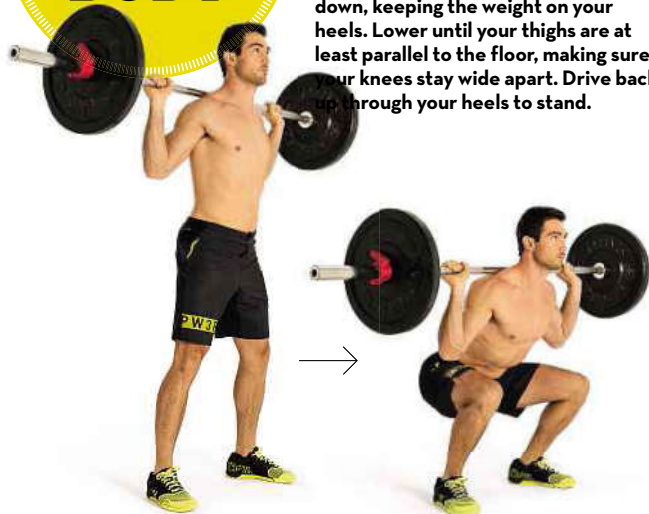
**WORKOUT 3**

**LOWER BODY**

**1// BACK SQUAT**

SETS 4 REPS 6 REST  
90SEC TEMPO 4010

Stand with your feet just wider than shoulder-width apart, resting the bar on the back of your shoulders. With your chest up and core braced, squat down, keeping the weight on your heels. Lower until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor, making sure your knees stay wide apart. Drive back up through your heels to stand.



**2// FRONT SQUAT**

SETS 4 REPS 12 REST 90SEC TEMPO 4010

Rest the bar across your upper chest with your hands holding it in place and your elbows as high as you can get them. Keeping your chest up and your back straight, squat down, taking the weight through your heels. Lower until your thighs pass parallel, making sure your knees stay wide apart, then drive back up.

**THE MAGIC FORMULA**

Mix up these supplement shakes to take before, during and after your workouts and reap maximum muscle-building reward

**BEFORE  
PRE-WORKOUT  
SHAKE**

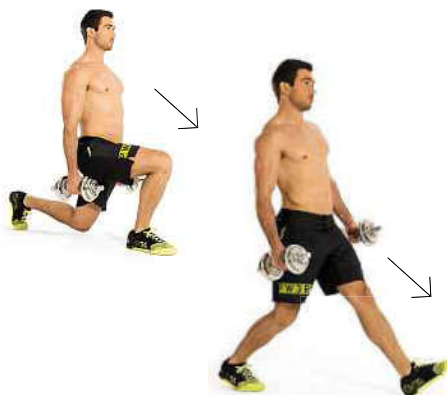
A spike of caffeine will help you get the most out of the toughest workouts, while some contain amino acids to give your muscles a head-start at rebuilding.

**DURING  
CARB SHAKE**

For effective muscle growth you need carbs to help shuttle protein to your muscles. By taking them in a shake during your workout, you'll rapidly replace calories that will fuel the rebuilding process.

**AFTER  
PROTEIN, CARB  
AND CREATINE  
SHAKE**

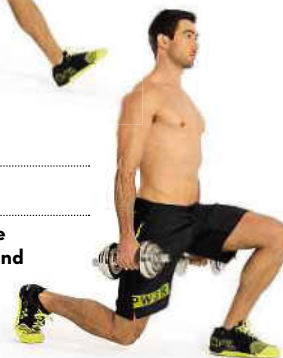
Use a 2:1 ratio of carbs to protein for muscle growth. Add creatine as a back-up energy source and to reduce muscle breakdown.



**3// DUMBBELL WALKING LUNGE**

SETS 3 REPS 12 EACH SIDE  
REST 90SEC TEMPO 4010

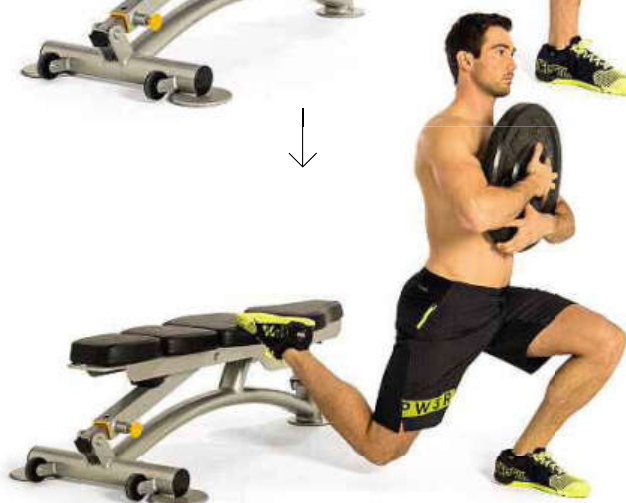
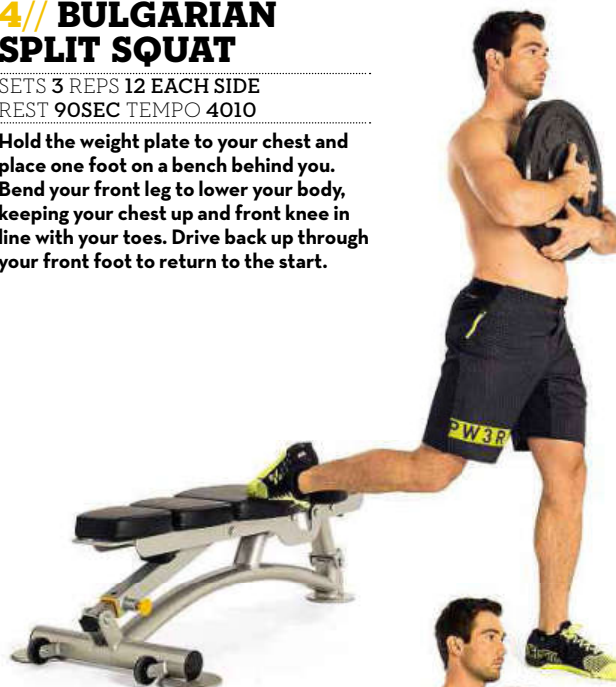
Holding dumbbells in each hand, lunge forwards, keeping your back upright and your front knee over your front foot. Lower until your back knee is just off the floor, then drive through the heel of your front foot to stand and continue straight into a lunge with your other leg.



**4// BULGARIAN SPLIT SQUAT**

SETS 3 REPS 12 EACH SIDE  
REST 90SEC TEMPO 4010

Hold the weight plate to your chest and place one foot on a bench behind you. Bend your front leg to lower your body, keeping your chest up and front knee in line with your toes. Drive back up through your front foot to return to the start.





## WORKOUT 4

# UPPER BODY

### 1A// INCLINE DUMBBELL PRESS

SETS 4 REPS 15 REST 0SEC TEMPO 4010

Lie on a bench set at a 45° angle, holding dumbbells beside your chest. Drive your feet into the floor and press the weights straight overhead before lowering slowly.



#### WHY DOES IT HURT?

*Learn to accept and overcome delayed onset muscle soreness*

Delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS), often at its most grisly 48 hours after exercise, is caused by microtraumas in your muscle fibres. Active recovery will relieve the symptoms. If your legs are

suffering, a brisk walk or jog will help. If it's your arms, try mimicking the moves that got them that way with very light weights or resistance bands to flush blood through the affected muscles.



### 1B// CHEST-SUPPORTED REVERSE FLYE

SETS 4 REPS 15 REST 90SEC TEMPO 4010

Lie chest-down on a bench set at a 45° angle, holding light dumbbells with straight arms, palms facing each other. Squeeze your upper back muscles together and raise your arms out to the sides until they're parallel with the floor, then lower them to the start.



## 2A// DIAMOND PRESS-UP

SETS 4 REPS 15 REST 0SEC TEMPO 4010

Perform a standard press-up but with the tips of your thumbs and forefingers touching to make a diamond shape. Lower your chest all the way until it touches your hands, then press back up until your arms are straight. This ensures a full range of motion to work your pecs and triceps.



## 2B// BARBELL BICEPS CURL

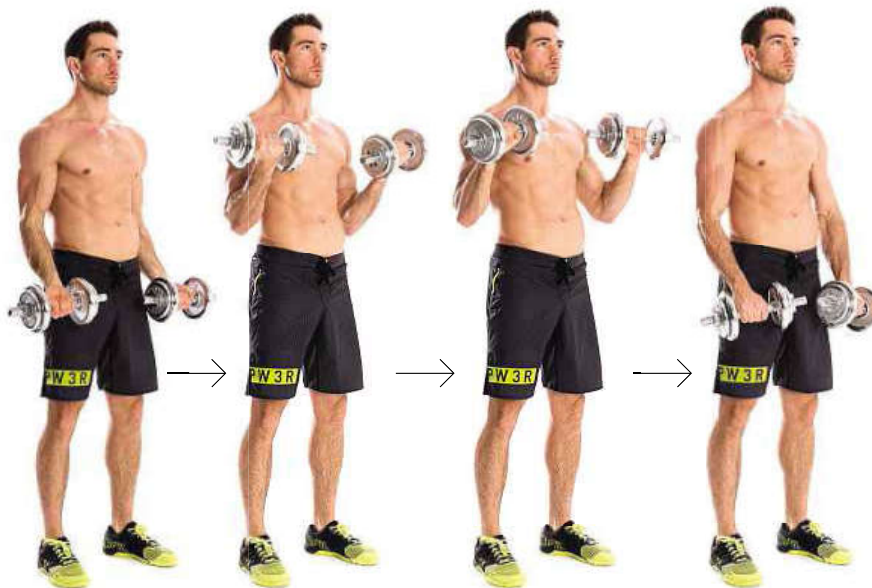
SETS 4 REPS 15 REST 90SEC TEMPO 4010

Hold a barbell with your hands shoulder-width apart and your palms facing forwards. Keeping your elbows close to your sides, and without leaning back, curl the bar up to your chest. Squeeze your biceps hard, then lower the bar.

## 3A// ZOTTMAN CURL

SETS 4 REPS 15 REST 0SEC TEMPO 4010

Hold dumbbells by your sides with your palms facing forwards. Keeping your elbows close to your sides, curl the weights up to your chest. Rotate the weights so your palms face forwards again and slowly lower. Rotate the weights at the bottom and repeat.



## 3B// DUMBBELL TRICEPS EXTENSION

SETS 4 REPS 15 REST 90SEC TEMPO 4010

Stand holding dumbbells above your head with your upper arms close to your ears. Keeping your upper arms static, bend at the elbows to lower the weights behind your head, then flex your triceps to raise the weights straight up.



### WHAT NEXT?

Repeat this plan for three weeks, tweaking key variables to keep your arms growing

'This plan is adapted from a training protocol called "Y3T", says Gethin. 'Over three weeks you rotate between low, moderate and high repetitions to stimulate all your muscle fibres and induce both forms of hypertrophy (sarcoplasmic and

myofibrillar) while reducing the risk of injury. Altering the tempo, rest and rep ranges each week will keep you progressing. Follow the table below, and increase the weights fractionally from week 1 and 4 when all the variables are the same.'

WEEK	1	2	3	4
TEMPO	4010	3010	2010	4010
REST	90sec	2min	3min	90sec
REPS	As written	All +4	All +10	As written



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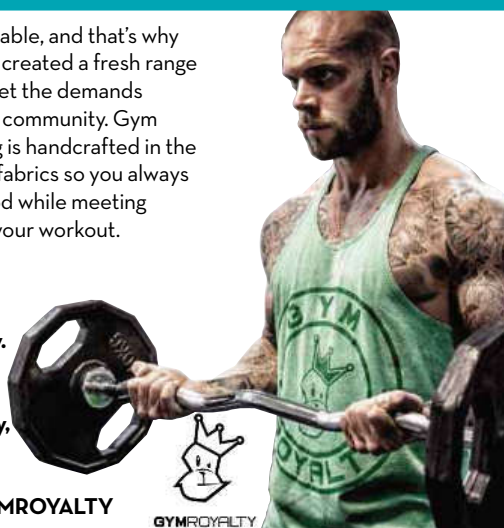
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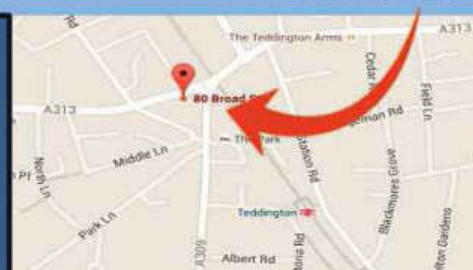
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A black short-sleeved rugby jersey with a V-neck. It features the Adidas logo on the left chest, the All Blacks silver fern logo on the right chest, and the Rugby World Cup 2015 logo on the upper left sleeve. The background is dark.

# All Blacks

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# AVERAGE DAY



## Nick Mitchell

Author, strength and conditioning coach and founder of the Ultimate Performance gym chain ([upfitness.co.uk](http://upfitness.co.uk))

'I travel a lot to my various gyms but home right now is Marbella, Spain, where my life couldn't be more regimented. In the UK, I have a 30-minute walk to my Mayfair gym. There's no time for breakfast so, while I don't love fasted cardio, I do it when in London as a change of pace.'



'An hour of emails. It breaks the back of the first part of the daily influx.'



'We're organising new gym developments. Right now we're in the final stages of preparation for Ultimate Performance Manchester.'

'Alongside the meetings, emails and telephone calls, I always try to hide somewhere for an hour or so just to get some writing done. Not necessarily writing a book or an article, but I find that setting my thoughts down into writing is the best way for me to crystallise my ideas.'

'By now I'm usually tired so I tend to leave reactive work to this time of day. I spend a lot of time on emails. Thanks to technology I can run an international business from anywhere in the world, but it also means I'm always on call.'

**4.30AM**

Wake up

'Usually woken up by my son, Roman.'

**5AM**

Cardio

**6AM**

Breakfast



'Usually at the Grosvenor House Hotel. I try to bring one of my team so we can get conversations rolling, but failing that I'm usually on Skype to Asia for 30 minutes every day. I have a Hong Kong gym opening soon.'

**8AM**

Training

**10AM**

Email

'My workouts are 20% less ferocious than in my heyday, which is a recognition of the fact that I can't fry my adrenals in the gym while at the same time overstressing them in my business life. I make a point of moving my body every day, though.'

**11AM**

Conference calls

**12.30PM**

Lunch

'I don't "do lunch". A bad habit of mine is forgetting to eat, so grabbing a shake and a handful of nuts is my usual on-the-go option.'

**2-5PM**

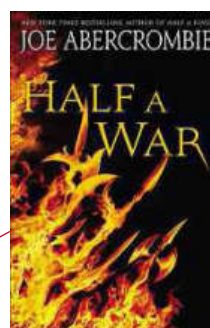
Meetings

**7PM**

More email

**9-10PM**

Switching off



'I usually do this by reading fiction. I don't want anything that challenges my brain too much so I tend to opt for romping yarns rather than heavyweight novels. On my bedside table right now is *Half A War* by Joe Abercrombie.'

Words: Joel Snape

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☒ GET LEAN ABS

☒ BUILD FUNCTIONAL STRENGTH

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## BUILT FOR PURPOSE

**Y**our six-pack should be for more than just show. Anyone can put their rectus abdominis on display through diet and discipline, but for a strong, functional midsection you need to work your whole core.

That's where this guide comes in. Every workout is designed to build a core that leaves you prepared for real-life challenges as well as showing off on the beach. And with TRX, barbell, pull-up and no-kit plans, there's a training option to suit any situation you may find yourself in. Get them done and build a midsection that's about go as well as show.

FREE WITH  
THE OCTOBER  
2015 ISSUE OF  
*MEN'S FITNESS*

Words Joel Snape Photography Nicky Johnston  
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Design Jo Gurney Subeditor Jo Williams



# ABS



# CORE VALUES

Building a strong midsection isn't that different from building any other muscle – with a few caveats. Here are your rules of (muscular) engagement

## STOP THE SIT-UPS

You probably know this one already, but just in case. Done badly, sit-ups put excessive strain on your lower back, work your hip flexors more than your abs and can even hurt your neck if you're the 'pull your head up with your hands' type. Even done well, they're less than optimal. After all, how many times in real life do you use your abs to do hundreds of mini-movements?

## BRACE YOURSELF

As back and core expert Dr Stuart McGill points out, you're most likely to use your midsection to brace yourself for other movements in real life, whether that's doing an overhead squat or just not falling over when standing up in a crowded tube train. Your core training should reflect this, which is why the exercises in this guide focus on plank-style movements.

## LIFT BIG

Direct abs training is the best way to make quick gains, but you'll also benefit from including moves that force core engagement in your regular workouts. For example, according to some studies pull-ups and press-ups cause more electrical activation in your midsection than weighted crunches, and even a standing shoulder press takes a lot of involvement from your abs.

## DON'T IGNORE YOUR BACK

Your six-pack is just the start: for a fully functional core you also need to work your obliques (the muscles that run down either side of your midriff) and, to stave off postural problems, your lower back. The moves in this guide will help, but make sure you include exercises such as deadlifts and kettlebell swings to your other training sessions.



# ABS

## WORKOUT 1

BUILD...

## A GYMNAST'S CORE

No pommel horse? No problem. Gymnasts use back-to-basics floor work to get in gold-medal condition. It's simple, not easy

### 1// HOLLOW DISH HOLD

SETS 5 TIME 20SEC

Lie on the floor and bring your shoulders and legs slightly off the ground, forming a 'dish' shape. Hold for the required time, keeping your abs braced, then lower.

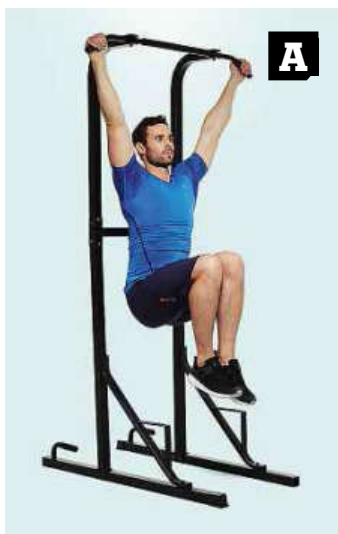
Hold your arms above your head to make it harder



### 2// TUCK HOLD TO L-SIT

SETS 5 REPS 5

Hang from a bar or rings, keeping your core braced. Bring your knees up until your thighs are parallel to the ground, then straighten your legs to point your toes forward. Return to the start under control.



## WORKOUT 2

# BUILD...

## SPECIAL FORCES ABS

Planks are old hat. Use this variation, created by ex-Spetsnaz trainer Pavel Tsatsouline, to build hard abs fast

### 1// RKC PLANK

SETS 5 TIME 10SEC

Get in a plank position and bring your elbows as far forward as possible and (preferably) close together. Brace your glutes and core as hard as possible. If you can hold it for longer than ten seconds, brace harder.

**A****B**



# ABS

## WORKOUT 3

BUILD...

## BOXER-LEVEL ROTATIONAL POWER

Forget crunches – modern boxers use rotational moves to improve their punching power and build cast-iron obliques

### 1// BOXER'S TWIST

SETS 5 REPS 10 EACH SIDE

Stand holding one end of a weighted barbell with the other end wedged into a corner or a weight plate on the ground. Twist and lower the barbell to one side then the other – you should feel the motion in your abs as if you're throwing a punch. Superset with rounds of shadow boxing.

To build sports-specific strength, stand with one foot forward



#### WORKOUT 4

## BUILD

# A CORE LIKE A CLIFF DIVER'S

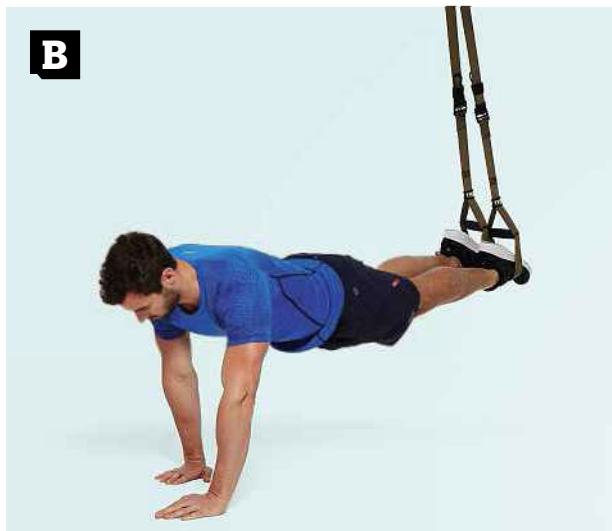
When you're leaping headfirst into the sea, maintaining the correct position is crucial. Here's how to do it

**A**

## 1// TRX PIKE TO WALK

SETS 4 REPS 5 PIKES,  
8 STEPS

Get into a press-up position with your feet in the straps of the TRX. Brace your abs and bring your feet towards your hands, jackknifing at the waist. Complete the required number of reps. After the final rep, from the press-up position walk your hands forward four steps and then back again. Yes, it's a killer.

**B**



# ABS

## WORKOUT 5

BUILD...

## A BJJ-PROOF STOMACH

Take Brazilian jiu jitsu lightly and you'll finish your first class on the floor. Lay the groundwork with the abs essentials and make sure you're fully prepared

### 1// SEATED X

SETS 3 TIME 30SEC

Sit on the floor with your arms folded across your chest, your ankles crossed and your feet off the ground. Uncross your ankles and straighten your legs out to the sides, then return to the start. Do as many as possible in the stated time.

A



B



## 2// FLUTTER KICK

SETS 3 TIME 30SEC

From the same position, and with your core still braced, bring one foot above the other and then swap, continuing for the required amount of time.

A



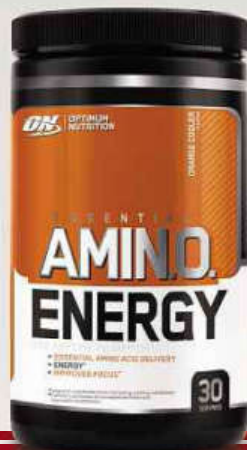
B

To make it harder, lean back further





# STAY SHARP



Remain focused throughout the day with Optimum Nutrition's Essential Amino Energy

Caffeine is the most popular and widely-used nutritional supplement in the world. But for most people, getting their daily fix involves simply necking copious amounts of tea and coffee or resorting to sugar-packed energy drinks – hardly the most efficient, nutritious or scientific approach.

Enter Optimum Nutrition's Essential Amino Energy, an upgrade on your regular brew of choice. It's specially formulated with 100mg of caffeine – including green tea and green coffee extracts – to help fuel your morning, enhance your workouts and beat the dreaded afternoon energy slump.

With just 30 calories per serving, it's easy to accommodate in even the strictest fat loss diets – and it includes 5g of amino acid blend. All you have to do is add two scoops to a glass of water and reap the refreshing, focus-enhancing benefits.

Optimum Nutrition Essential Amino Energy is available in Fruit Fusion, Lemon Lime and Orange Cooler flavours – and now three new flavours have been added to the range: Strawberry Lime, Pineapple and Blueberry.



## ESSENTIAL ENERGISER

Two Optimum Nutrition athletes and one *Men's Fitness* writer explain how Essential Amino Energy helps them maintain peak performance every day

### ROB ARMSTRONG

**Optimum Nutrition athlete**

"Trying to balance my gym regime and rugby training around my nine-to-five job can be exhausting, but I find a dose of Essential Amino Energy every morning really helps me focus and hit the ground running for the day ahead."

### BEN INCE

**Men's Fitness deputy editor**

"I used to always have a black coffee an hour before hitting the gym, but often it'd cause me indigestion mid-workout. Switching to Essential Amino Energy has cleared this up entirely, and it tastes far better than the instant machine coffee from our office kitchen."

### LUCY WALTON

**Optimum Nutrition athlete**

"I travel a lot with work and I need caffeine to help me get over jetlag and through my workouts, but most shop-bought coffees are so bad! Essential Amino Energy sachets are an absolute lifesaver - they're the first things I pack in my suitcase."



Rob Armstrong



Lucy Walton

In association with



OPTIMUM  
NUTRITION



# ABS

## WORKOUT 6

BUILD...

## OBSTACLE-RACER ABS

To get through a Tough Mudder you need abs made for crawling and climbing. Here's how to get them if you've got limited exercise space

### 1// SPIDER-MAN CRAWL

SETS 3 REPS 5 EACH SIDE

Do this at the end of a training run. Start on your forearms, with your core braced. Take one leg off the ground and bring the knee up to your side. Return to the start and repeat on the other side.

A



B



## 2// WALKING PLANK

SETS 3 REPS 10

From the plank position resting on your forearms, 'walk' up on to one hand, then the other, so you're in a press-up position. Walk back down again, then repeat starting on the other hand. You'll thank us on race day.

A



To make it even harder, add a press-up between reps

B





# ABS

## WORKOUT 7

BUILD...

## BODYBUILDER ABS

Winners of competitive fitness titles have six-packs that perform as well as look good. Complete Ryan Terry's abs finisher once or twice a week to grow your own

### 1// HANGING LEG RAISE

SETS 3 REPS  
TO FAILURE

The secret to success in this move is tempo. Hang from a bar and bring your legs up until they're parallel to the floor, taking two seconds to raise them. Pause, then lower for four seconds and repeat. Keep going until you fail, rest for 90 seconds and complete two more sets in the same way before going straight into the next move.



**A**

## 2// HANGING KNEE RAISE

SETS 1 REPS TO FAILURE

You should find this easier than the leg raise. Do it at normal pace, aiming to do as many extra reps as possible before you fall off the bar.

**B**

If your grip starts to fail before your abs, use straps to increase your hang time



# ABS

## WORKOUT 8

BUILD...

## MMA-READY ABS

UFC fighters need to be able to twist, punch and throw, as well as get off the ground. Train for the lot

### 1// TURKISH GET-UP

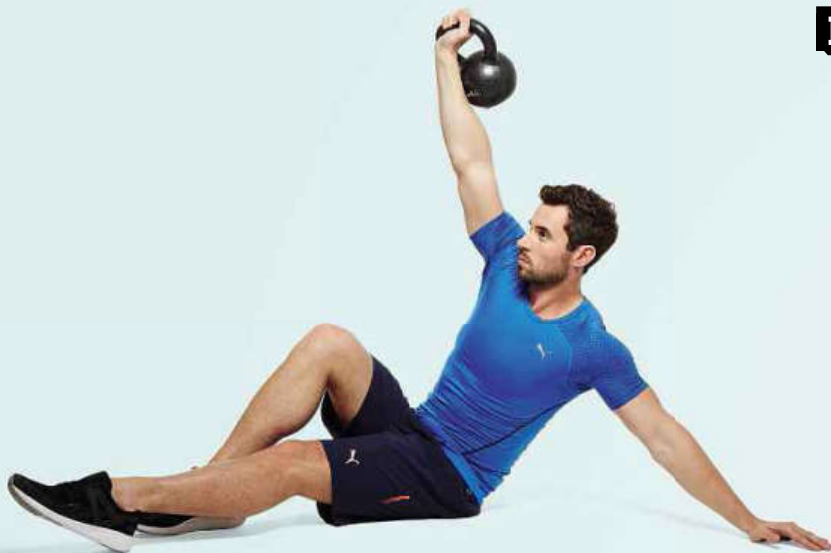
SETS 3 REPS 3 EACH SIDE

Start on your back with a kettlebell in one hand. Roll on to your other forearm for support, then bring one foot underneath you and use the tripod-style stance to get to your feet. Pause, then return to the start.

A



B



## 2// TRX PLANK

SETS 3 TIME 60SEC

Get in the top press-up position with your feet in the straps of the suspension trainer. Hold the position for the required time, bracing your core as hard as you can. Hey, it's not as bad as being kneed in the stomach.

Too easy? Add  
five press-ups  
during each set





# ABS

## WORKOUT 9

BUILD...

## NAVY-SEAL ABS

Flutter kicks are the cornerstone of the US special forces' Hell Week. Use them to unleash a fat-burning inferno on your midsection

### 1// FLUTTER KICK

SETS 3 TIME 30SEC

Lie on the floor and raise your shoulders and feet off the ground. Kick your feet up and down as if you were doing the front crawl. Keep your legs straight to feel the burn.



### 2// RUSSIAN TWIST

SETS 3 REPS 8 EACH SIDE

Holding a medicine ball with straight arms, keep your knees slightly bent and feet off the floor, then twist from one side to the other, keeping the movement slow and controlled.



## WORKOUT 10

# BUILD...

## SPARTAN ABS

This routine, created by Bobby Maximus of Gym Jones, formed part of the training for the cast of the film 300

### 1// TURKISH GET-UP

SETS 5 REPS 3 EACH SIDE

Start on your back with a kettlebell in one hand. Roll on to your other forearm for support, then bring one foot underneath you and use the tripod-style stance to get to your feet. Pause, then return to the start.



### 2// PLANK

SETS 3 TIME 60SEC

Get into the top press-up position and hold for the required time, bracing your core as hard as you can. Prepare for glory.



To make the move tougher, bring your elbows and feet closer together



# ABS

## WORKOUT 11

BUILD...

## POWERLIFTER STRENGTH

Legendary strength coach Jim Wendler includes two secret weapons in his workouts. Add them both to a leg day

### 1// BARBELL ROLL-OUT

SETS 4 REPS 10

Start on your knees, holding a barbell with a shoulder-width grip. Roll the barbell away from you until your upper body is parallel to the floor. Pause, then pull the bar back in.

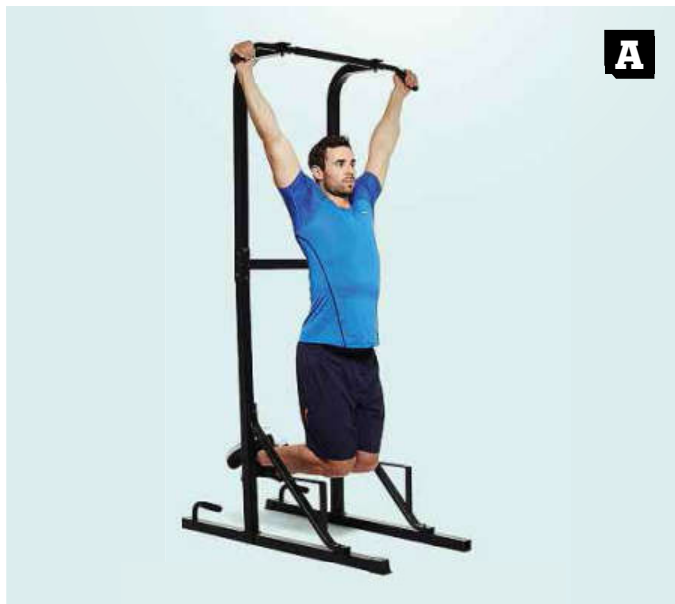
Use a towel under your knees for comfort

A



B



**A**

## 2// HANGING LEG RAISE

SETS 4 REPS 10

Hang from a bar and bring your legs up until they're parallel to the floor, then lower and repeat.

**B**



# ABS

## WORKOUT 12

BUILD...

### SKI-READY ABS

You won't be showing off your six-pack on the slopes but strong obliques will make slalom turns easier

#### 1// TRX SKIER

SETS 3 REPS 10 EACH SIDE

Get into the top press-up position with your feet in straps of the TRX. Bring both knees towards one elbow, pause, straighten them again and repeat on the other side.



#### 2// TRX SLALOM

SETS 3 REPS 10 EACH SIDE

Keep your feet in the straps and move your legs to one side, then the other. Keep your knees straight for the best results.



## WORKOUT 13

BUILD...

# SHOW-OFF POWER

The standing roll-out should be in all gym-goers' arsenals. Start with the TRX version and graduate to the wheel

## 1// STANDING TRX ROLL-OUT

SETS 5 REPS 2

Stand under the anchor point of the TRX with a strap in each hand. Lean forward, pushing the straps ahead of you, until your body is in a straight line - depending on how low the TRX hangs, this should be fairly parallel to the ground. Brace everything, then pull back in. If it's too easy, make the straps longer.



For better shoulder health, bring your arms out in a 'Y' or 'T' shape



# ABS

## WORKOUT 14

BUILD...

### CLIMBER'S ABS

Strength is never more important than when you're dangling from an overhang. Work your midsection with isometric moves for a rock-hard core

#### 1// TRX WALKING PLANK

SETS 3 REPS 8

With your feet in TRX straps, go from a press-up position into a plank by 'walking' down on to your forearms, then reverse the move to return to the start.



#### 2// HANGING L-SIT

SETS 3 TIME 15SEC

Hang from a bar with a shoulder-width grip and lift your legs to form an L with your torso. Brace your core and hold the position for the required time.



## WORKOUT 15

BUILD...

# CHAMPIONSHIP-LEVEL ABS

Former UFC champion Georges St-Pierre uses unconventional moves to get ready for anything. Here's his one-hit finisher

**A**

## 1// GYM BALL V-SIT

SETS 3 REPS 8

Lie down holding a gym ball in both hands on the floor over your head. Keeping your legs straight, bring your arms and legs up into a V-sit position and pass the ball from your hands to your feet. Pause at the bottom, then reverse the move. That's one rep.



**B**





# MIDDLE MANAGERS

Pills and powders can't build abs for you – but they'll certainly help

## BETA-ALANINE

A type of amino acid that improves your levels of focus and concentration during workouts or sports that require repeated sprints or bursts of power. Take it before a workout to attack your abs with unparalleled intensity.

## BCAAs

Branched-chain amino acids (BCAAs) comprise three essential amino acids: leucine, isoleucine and valine. Use them to hold on to muscle while you're doing fat-burning cardio to reveal your abs.

## CASEIN

This form of protein is commonly found in dairy products – it makes up around 80% of cow's milk. It's a slow-release protein, which means it takes longer for your body to digest, so you get more of a 'drip-feed' effect of protein into your bloodstream for a longer period. Take it before bed to stay fuelled.

## CREATINE

Your body metabolises creatine into adenosine triphosphate (ATP), which is used for every initial muscle movement. It's therefore vital to have adequate supplies during heavy, high-intensity workouts to deliver the required energy to your muscles. Take it after a workout to fuel your gains.

## FISH OIL

Alongside a host of other health benefits, fish oil has fat-burning properties and can reduce inflammation – so it might be the nudge your abs need, especially if you don't get enough fish in your diet. Take it daily in pill or liquid form, preferably with food.

## GREEN TEA

A natural fat burner that comes from the leaves of the *Camellia sinensis* plant. Use it daily to give your fat-burning efforts a boost – it's available in powder form, but swapping it in for your regular builder's tea will work just as well.

## WHEY PROTEIN

The one you've heard of. Whey protein is made from cow's milk and comes in different forms such as isolate, concentrate and

hydrolysate. The great thing about whey is that it's rapidly and easily absorbed, making it ideal to take during the critical post-workout window when your body is primed for building muscle. Whey protein can also lower hunger levels due to its influence on the hormone ghrelin, which can be very useful if you're dieting.

Take whey protein within ten minutes of completing your workout to promote recovery and take advantage of the temporary rise in protein synthesis. Just avoid the sugar-packed high-carb versions.







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